

*A Town  
That Went to Sea*



*by*

AUBIGNE LERMOND PACKARD



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# A TOWN THAT WENT TO SEA



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by

Aubigne Lermond Packard

*"But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended) it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: 'In this town there can be no romance—what could happen here?' Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand & McNally."—O. Henry*

FALMOUTH PUBLISHING HOUSE  
PORTLAND, MAINE



*“Every great work of art is a product of the life of the community in which it is produced. The great paintings of Holland and of Italy, the great sculptures of Greece and of Rome, all had their roots in the lives of the people. What more beautiful expression of its life and its spirit could any people ask than to have its memory enshrined in the ethereal beauty of a fleet of ships under full sail?”*

## *Acknowledgments*

THE AUTHOR'S maternal grandfather, Joshua Morton, was born in 1789 and her paternal grandfather, Percy Lermond in 1797. Coming from a long line of raconteurs who brought the past vividly to life she has sometimes felt as though she had lived through those early years. Her grandfather Morton had served in the War of 1812. As a child she often went with her grandmother Morton to swear to something or other when she got her pension. Her grandfather Lermond's Aunt Mary married Cyrus Eaton, the local historian; consequently the author was brought up on the *Annals of Warren* and the *Annals of Thomaston* to which she is indebted for many of the facts in the early history of this volume.

For whole-hearted cooperation from the late Susan Alice Ranlett she must give thanks for the privilege of using her mother's diary, parts of her father's diary, and the account of his trip to Greenland. Others to whom acknowledgments are gratefully made are G. P. Putnam and Sons, publishers, for the use of material in the chapter, *Charles Ranlett Flint*; the late Sidney B. Lermond for counsel and advice on the building of vessels; the late Charles Creighton for data concerning the lime business and anecdotes; the late Lawrence Dunn for shipyard pictures; the late Edward O'B. Burgess, who gave without reserve of his vast store of personal recollections and experiences; the *Courier Gazette* for the use of its files; Mrs. William J. Tobey and Mrs. Charles Copeland for use of material on Pitcairn Island; the late Fred Swift for shipyard lore and anecdotes; Miss Mary E. Kalloch for letter and pictures; Mrs. Charles Watts of South Thomaston for permission to use the material in the chapter, *Saved by a Dream*; Mr. Eugene Henry for the chapter, *A Sea of Pumice Stone*; the late Mrs. Blanche Robinson Ayers for the facts in the chapter, *A Palace Looted*; the late Captain Samuel Watts, 2nd, for reminiscences cov-

ering a long life on the sea; the late Captain Charles E. Holbrook for facts concerning the torpedoing of the *Hattie Dunn*; Mrs. Ida Harlow, daughter of Captain Tom Libby; the late Miss Alice Oliver; the late Mr. and Mrs. Edwin S. Watts; Mrs. Allen H. Strong for vivid accounts of life aboard ship; Miss Ella K. Gilchrist, Thomaston librarian, for help in research; in fact, the author acknowledges her indebtedness to the whole town a part of which she was and all of which was a part of her.



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# A TOWN THAT WENT TO SEA





## *Thomaston Sets the Stage*

IF "ALL THE WORLD'S a stage and all the men and women merely players," the author would advise all those who wish to get a good view of the performance to locate in a small town or village where the audience and actors have a personal acquaintance with one another, and where what goes on behind the scenes is as much a part of the performance as that which is properly staged in front. In a large city it is possible for the average person to see only certain aspects of the play, to have an acquaintance, so to speak, with no one but the actor who plays the part of the servant or the leading lady. Now, no matter how wholesome or charming either of these actors may be, one necessarily can get only a biased view of the performance by so limited an acquaintance. On the other hand, in a small town or village the personal acquaintance with each actor, backed up by a knowledge of his family history and tradition, gives one not only an insight into why each person plays his part as he does, but also gives one a better understanding of the performance as a whole.

Thomaston was like all other small towns in that respect. Everybody knew everybody else, all of his relatives, most of his affairs, and whether he "took after" his great grandmother on his father's side or was "just like 'old Ben' on his mother's side." Although some fair leading lady might be so proud that you couldn't touch her with a ten-foot pole or some pompous male might strut and swagger through his part, they were generally taken down a peg or two when they came off-stage and were appraised for just what they were worth. Since the majority of those taking the leads had worked their way up from small beginnings, they were not allowed to forget it if they would. On the whole, emphasis was laid on how one played one's part.

Those who did that well, whether their role was great or small, received the respect due them.

Not only were there leading ladies and leading men and those playing the humdrum parts in the town's cast of characters, but the villain and his victim, the outcast, the buffoon, and the fool were there, too, to make the cast complete.

In the early days garrisons, blockhouses, and forts made up the scenery. Savages lurked in the wings, militiamen flitted on and off the stage, while Committees of Safety and Correspondence acted as stage managers.

A short but stirring act occurred in 1780 when General Peleg Wadsworth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's grandfather, was stationed in the town. He had been given command of the eastern department of Massachusetts from the Piscataqua River to the St. Croix, and was sent to the region to dislodge, if possible, the British who were strongly entrenched at *Biguyduce* (Castine). The coming of the "Red Coats" to capture him gave a dash of villainy to the play and a flashing bit of color to the costumes. As should properly happen in all well-plotted drama, Wadsworth emerged a hero and the plaudits that first sounded in that far-off day have never died down.

During the comparatively short curtain that ensued there was much stir and commotion backstage where the furniture and properties were being handled with great vigor. When the curtain next went up the furniture had been rearranged, and the setting was entirely new, a complete Revolution. Impressively stalking upon the stage came the new leading man, General Henry Knox, ably supported by his leading lady, the capricious and charming Lucy Knox. For about ten years they held the center of the stage. During that time the play took on an atmosphere of elegant refinement. Much of the furniture and many of the costumes came from abroad, as did a few of the actors, who gave not a little "tone" to the play by their conversations in the French language. Knox's death, as sudden and dramatic as any playwright could plot, brought the drama to a temporary halt.

Again there was much commotion before the curtain went up. There was the distant sound of gunfire, causing much speculation as to what the scene would be when the next act was ready to



begin. The roar of the cannon "nearer, clearer, deadlier than before" caused the curtain to sway and flap while the scenery was being shifted to make a suitable background for the War of 1812. Although the distant stage views were wholly maritime, the last ditch of that war was on Thomaston's very doorstep; consequently, much local scenery was in evidence. The whole act was tumultuous and gruelling. Villains were again rushing to and fro plotting and counterplotting until one began to wonder just what the outcome would be. When right finally triumphed over might and the curtain dropped with a thud, the members of the cast were given a mighty ovation. Everybody had had quite enough of war drama and was ready for something more peaceful and quiet.

Up to that time the costumes for the majority of the cast had been rather plain and simple. With the return of peace and the opportunity to develop the arts and the graces that go with it, a decided change took place. Silks, satins, brocades, broadcloth and laces displaced the lowly homespun, giving such an air of grace and distinction to the erstwhile simply clad actors that it was difficult to realize they were one and the same. Fine feathers do make fine-looking birds. The launching of clipper ships on the river banks gave a zest and flavor to the production which will linger as long as the tide rises and ebbs in the Georges.

In the background at that time one caught glimpses of sails set for trips around the Horn, for India and Cathay. Of that scenery one of the onlookers wrote: "Sails new and everything set, under a cloud of canvas—a sight that—until I pass inside the pearly gates and see the wonders of the City Beautiful, not half of whose glories have ever been told—I never expect to see again!"

On the quarter decks of the ships one could see dignified captains standing in austere silence while nimble sailors climbed the rigging or rolled across the decks in response to the harsh commands of dynamic mates. Occasionally an elegantly dressed lady would emerge from a ship's cabin to parade across the deck or to stand in proud partnership with her masterful husband. Occasionally there were tragic scenes of death and disaster, of women in widow's robes and of haggard children with wondering and sorrowful eyes. So strong is the element of joy, however, that such

sad episodes were quickly passed over and everybody proceeded to act as though high tides and favoring winds were to last forever.

So far as Thomaston was concerned the Mexican War was just a distant rumble and caused little stir in the stage setting. Possibly some local vessels might have been seen transporting troops to participate in the fray, but other than that it did not bring any great change in the daily round of the people. The Civil War, on the other hand, all but made Thomaston a side show in the great southern drama. The close relations between the shipbuilders and shipowners of the town with the cotton growers and shippers of the South, together with the threat of almost total destruction of their own business interests aroused a sympathy for the southern cause that amounted almost to treason. It is stated on good authority that, when word reached Thomaston that Abraham Lincoln had been shot, two well-known Thomaston women danced in glee.

The so-called "Copper-heads" were members of the older generation—representative of those interested in maintaining the status quo. When the call "To arms!" came the younger generation responded with all the ardor of youth. As "boys in blue"—and the majority were boys in their teens—they marched across the stage to go to the defense of the Union, some to fight on southern battlefields, others to man the battleships that were blockading Rebel ports.

There were sail-loft scenes where women as well as men bent over heavy sail cloth to fashion tents that northern soldiers might not be obliged to sleep under open southern skies. Everybody endured privation greater than any we have ever known since. Every last man, woman and child wanted to see the Union spared, but the general feeling was that there would have been no danger of disruption of the Union had the question of slavery been handled with less heat.

The clamor and din of that great war drama was a long time dying down. The sorrow, suffering and heartache that followed in its wake cast a decidedly sombre hue over the Thomaston stage which was not dissipated until the spotlight was once again focussed on a succession of proud ships and schooners that carried



the name and fame of Thomaston to the uttermost parts of the earth.

From the day the play opened, down almost to the present time, the speech of the local actors was idiomatic, if not colloquial. It had the bite of the gale and the tang of the salt air combined with a dash of drollery that helped enhance the Yankee reputation for dry wit. Speech habits are formed so early and become so tenacious that a person, unless he is particularly desirous of improving himself, may fail altogether to notice his errors, or noticing them, may refuse to speak as well as he knows for fear of being suspected of putting on airs. A certain "emporium" in Boston, "Where-U-bot-the-hat," boasts in a sign on its walls, "This is a democratic store, we never use *fancy* expressions." That was exactly the state of affairs in Thomaston. Then, too, there was, as in all small communities, little of the herd tendency. People gloated over and fostered individuality. One of the commonest ways of expressing that individuality was by refusing to follow the example set by the preacher or the teacher and cultivating a picturesque and exotic manner of speech all one's own. They gloried in plain, blunt speech and delighted in calling a spade a spade. If their vocabularies were not classically Shakespearean neither is it to be supposed that contemporaries of the "great bard" shared with him his command of classical English.

The chief characteristics of the local vernacular were the words and expressions born of a familiarity with the sea and with ships. Our speech was liberally sprinkled with such expressions as "ship shape," "all rigged up," "right on deck," "running on the rocks," "high and dry," "tastes like bilge water," "all dressed up to go ashore," "cut and run," "take the wind out of his sails," "thin as a belaying pin," "right on her beam-water," and, "what he needs is a little ballast." A woman with large hips had to be careful about bending over for fear of showing "her great stern moulding," and if a person particularly distrusted the motives or disapproved of the actions of another, he emphatically said, "I don't like the cut of his jib." A properly cut jib, when set, presented a taut edge to the wind; if it were improperly cut, it flapped back and forth to the great annoyance of the sailors, hence the expression.

From the *Crick* to *Punkin* Hill, from Beechwoods to Brooklyn Heights, stretched the boards on which the panorama, ever changing yet never changing, was enacted. Old stars waned, new ones took their places. Scenery was shifted, spotlights were changed, but the play went on; for "the *play's* the thing." Of entrances there were many—every home in the community served as one. Of exits there were two: the Georges, "the nearer shore," down whose current many sailed so gaily away for a life on the bounding main; and the straight and narrow gate to "the farther shore" through which all eventually passed, we trust, to join the great white throng in the "better land" where the "streets, we are told, are paved with pure gold and the sun it shall never go down."

## *Unwelcome! Englishmen*

“GOOD QUEEN BESS” was dead. King James the First was on the throne of England. Virginia, that vast stretch of country in the new world that Britain claimed and had named for its “Virgin Queen,” was in danger of encroachment from the French. Their territorial claims were almost identical with those of the English. They dubbed the region “New France.” If England were to oust the intruders it was necessary that somebody be sent, and quickly, to make surveys for the establishment of colonies. There was no person in England who knew more about Virginia than Sir Walter Raleigh, for it was he who had explored and named it; but Raleigh was in prison and likely to stay there. James, being a son of the ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots, was naturally suspicious of all of Elizabeth’s followers, so Raleigh was left to languish in prison (he was later beheaded) while other men of courage and daring were sought to carry on to the “Westward Ho.”

Among the outstanding men in the field of exploration at that time was one Captain George Weymouth, who had gained some reputation as an able and distinguished navigator in search of the “Northwest Passage.” In 1605, under the auspices of Lord Arundel, Weymouth was commissioned to explore the coast of North Virginia. On the thirty-first of March of that year, he sailed from England to spy out the land.

With him aboard the *good ship Archangel*, in addition to the crew of twenty-seven, was a “gentleman” named Rosier, whose sole duty it was to write a record of the voyage and a description of the region visited. Rosier carried out his assignment faithfully. While his account has been called a glowing one, he did not widely overstep the bounds of truth. Anyone familiar with the Georges River in June can readily believe Rosier saw all he



claimed he had seen in that primeval wilderness at that season of the year.

Because no record of latitude and longitude was included in Rosier's published account, in the course of time there was some difference of opinion as to which river in North Virginia the *Archangel* had visited. Some claimants favored the Kennebec, others the Penobscot. It remained a subject of debate, until the middle of the last century, when Captain George Prince, a native of Thomaston, Maine, proved beyond the question of a doubt that the great river with many "gallant coves" and "in the road directly with the mountains" was none other than the Georges. A stone cross marking the discovery was set up on Allen's Island at the mouth of the river in 1905, the tercentenary of its exploration.

On the eleventh of May, 1605, Weymouth sighted Cape Cod, but because of shoal water did not venture ashore. Instead, he pointed the prow of the *Archangel* northeasterly (down-East). Sailing along until about dusk of the seventeenth he came to anchor in the lee of a large island, which he named St. Georges' Island in honor of himself and England's patron saint. The island is now known by its Indian name, Monhegan.

On the following day, the Captain and twelve of his men went ashore to reconnoitre. They found evidence of a fire and remnants of a savage feast. From the steep and rocky cliffs, they espied the mainland and, "a great way up into the main," as it then seemed, "we after *found* it," a backdrop of lofty mountains. They had brought with them a pinnace (small boat), which had to be set up before they could venture much farther in uncharted waters. One of the islands provided an excellent haven for the work in hand. It was given the name of Pentecost Harbor. There, not only was the pinnace set up, but wells were dug for fresh water, trees were felled for spars and for firewood and a garden was planted! Historians say this was probably the first garden in the state of Maine, if not in the Union.

The waters abounded with multitudes of fish and shell fish which yielded an abundance of pearls, as many as fifty in one shell. The pinnace being put together and made seaworthy, a cross was planted on one of the islands, and then on the thirtieth

of May "the captain with thirteen men, in the name of God, departed in the shallop" for the main.

About sundown of the same day the men who had been left aboard the *Archangel* caught their first glimpse of the natives. Three boatloads of them landed on a neighboring island. For some time they grouped themselves about a fire they kindled and stared in wonderment at the intruders, who were "weffing" (waving) to them. Mustering their courage, three of their number approached the ship. One, bolder than the rest, defiantly shouted at the newcomers, and dramatically pointing his paddle toward the open ocean, bade them begone.

The white men did not take the hint, but subtly began to make a show of friendship by displaying knives, mirrors, peacock feathers and other trinkets. The red men, like the cat that was killed by curiosity, finally came alongside ship where they made a very favorable impression as to their appearance and understanding. Rosier says they were "well countenanced, proportionable, not very tall nor big; with bodies painted black, their faces some with red, some with black, and some with blue; clothed with beaver and deer skin mantles fastened at their shoulders and hanging to their knees; some with sleeves, and some with buskins of such leather sewed; they seemed all very civil and merry; and we found them a people of exceeding good invention, quick understanding and ready capacity."

The following day the Indians were induced to come aboard and taste the ship's food. Being again shown knives, beads and other gew-gaws, they quickly grasped the idea of barter: if they would bring the strangers skins of the beaver and other animals these fascinating trinkets would be theirs. It is recorded that forty beaver pelts brought them five shilling's worth of baubles!

To the surprise of his followers and the astonishment of the natives, Weymouth unexpectedly appeared upon the scene "shooting volleys of shot" from his shallop to announce that he had found a great river trending "alongst" into the main for forty miles. He had come back to "flank his light horseman or gig, against Indian arrows" should he encounter them farther up stream.

For two days there was visiting back and forth and an ex-



change of presents. Everything was progressing so smoothly that Weymouth finally consented to accompany some of the savages on a trip to the eastward where he was led to suppose he would find an untold store of furs. On reaching the appointed spot, the presence of several hundred armed savages, accompanied by their dogs and tame wolves, savored too openly of treachery, so Weymouth refused to land and came back empty-handed. The Indians had equally good reasons for being suspicious of the strangers who had "come bearing gifts," for it was Weymouth's intention to kidnap several of their number to take back with him to England, hoping to train them as interpreters. Five were later captured by stealth while innocently feasting on gifts of food. They were bound, put in the hold of the vessel, where they were kept prisoners until the day of sailing.

On the "eleventh of June," Rosier says, "we passed up into the river with our ship, about six and twenty miles." They noted everything from the breadth and depth of the water to the height and distance of the mountains; and they did not fail to espy and evaluate the "tall fir, spruce, birch, beech, oak . . . fit timber for any use . . . notable timber trees, masts for ships of 400 tons." Alongside the river were "every half mile very gallant coves, some able to contain almost a hundred sail . . . most excellent places, as docks to grave or careen ships of all burthens secured from all winds."

The unfolding loveliness of the river so impressed them all that they were more than eager to penetrate its entire length. Provided with a cross and "furnished with armour and shot both to defend and offend," they ventured further up the stream. Where the river "trended westward into the main" (the site of the town of Thomaston), they set up the cross on the point of land jutting out into the river. Furnished as they were with ammunition for *offense* as well as defense, they evidently intended to take the land willy-nilly, but they justified themselves as is shown by the following entry in Rosier's journal.

"We diligently observed, that in no place, either about the islands, or up in the main, or amongst the river, we could discern any token or sign, that any Christian had been before; of which, either by cutting wood, digging for water, or setting up crosses

(a thing never omitted by any Christian travelers) we should have perceived some mention left." It would be interesting to know if the cross, like the pinnacle, had been brought from England. At the "codde" (bay) in the river, ten of the company went ashore with the intention of penetrating the region as far as the mountains which were plainly visible, but after marching about four miles and passing over three hills, and "because the weather was parching hot, and our men in their armour not able to travel far and return that night to our ship, we resolved not to pass any further, being all very weary of so tedious and laborious a travel."

The river was further explored up to the head of tide water—at the point where Warren Village now stands. From this point they returned to the mouth of the river and the *Archangel*, declaring with one accord that here was a river without a rival in the whole world—and they were travelers and explorers qualified to speak, for were they not familiar with the Thames, the Seine, the Loire? And they had beheld the Rio Grande and the mighty *Orinoque*! Only Rosier makes an exception, loyally saying, "I will not prefer it *before* our river of Thames, because it is England's richest treasure." Had they come in August instead of June, he might have found the two rivers almost identical—fog and all.

Here was a river worthy of the name "St. Georges" and so Weymouth named it. For lo these many years, however, the name has been familiarly shortened to "Georges."

Having taken possession of the river in the name of England and anxious to report to their sponsors, they turned the prow of the *Archangel* homeward. Rosier writes: "Sunday, the 16th of June, the wind being fair, and because we had set out of England upon a Sunday, made the islands upon a Sunday, and as we doubt not (by God's appointment) happily fell into our harbor upon a Sunday, so now . . . we weighed anchor and quit the land upon a Sunday." They so openly observed the Sabbath perhaps God forgave the shot for offense as well as defense and the five terrified Indians held captive in the hold; for they were safely guided home to Dartmouth, England, where they arrived July 14—a Sunday!

Three of the five captive Indians were delivered to Sir Fer-



dinand Gorges at Plymouth, England, and two, it is believed, to Sir John Popham. Gorges kept his wards in his family three years. They were well treated and taught to speak English. From them he learned so much of the region whose patent he held that he declared: "The capture of these Indians must be acknowledged the means, under God, of putting on foot and giving life to all our plantations."

Perhaps the best proof of kind treatment of the captives by their captors is shown in the attitude of the victims themselves. When they returned to this country, as four of them did, they acted as mediators between the pale-faces and their own people. Tisquantum, Squantum or Squanto as he is variously called, one of the returned captives, was the Indian who was recommended to the startled Pilgrims by Samoset, the messenger of good-will from "ye *eastrene* parts." Governor Bradford says: "Squanto continued with them, and was their interpreter, and was a *spetiall* instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed them how to set their *corne*, *wher* to take fish, and to procure other comodities, and was also their *pilott* to bring them to unknowne places for their *profitt*, and never left them till he *dyed*."

Indeed, his loyalty to the English finally led to downright disloyalty to his own race for his "*owne* ends." It is a bit disillusioning to learn that he was not loyal entirely for loyalty's sake, but to save his own scalp. Bradford goes on to say: "He *plaid* his *owne* game; by putting ye Indians in fear, and drawing gifts from them to enrich *himselfe*; making them *beleeve* he could *stur* up *warr* against whom he would, and make *peece* for whom he would. Yea, he made them *beleeve* they kept ye plague buried in ye ground, and could send it amongs whom they would, which did much *terrifie* the Indians and made them depend more on him, and *seeke* more to him then to *Massasoyte*, which procured him envie and had like to have cost him his live. For after the discovery of his practices, *Massasoyt* sought it both privatly and openly; which caused him to stick close to ye English, and he never *durst* go from them till he *dyed*."

Although the Georges was discovered and named in 1605, no

immediate settlement resulted. It was not until 1630, ten years after the establishment of the Plymouth Colony, that a truckhouse for trading with the Indians was located near what is now the foot of Wadsworth Street in Thomaston. Five men were stationed there. From this outpost traffic was carried on with the colony at Plymouth and with the mother country until interrupted by the outbreak of Indian hostilities in 1675. In addition to the men employed at the truckhouse, the region boasted "one lonely white man" as its sole inhabitant.

France claimed Pemaquid as the frontier of Acadia and broke up many trading posts in the disputed territory, but this port on the Georges continued to thrive under the auspices of its English promoters and for many years the Georges River was the tentative, if not the established, boundary between Acadia and the British colonies. Captain Benjamin Church, who visited the region several times recorded in 1696: "The river is not very safe on account of numerous rocks. It furnishes excellent oak for ship building. . . . This river has always served as boundary from east to west between the English and the French."

There were two reasons why Indian hostilities did not begin here sooner than they did. The first reason was that the Indians were warring among themselves and their numbers were greatly diminished. The second was that *Modockawando*, chief of the *Tarratines*, was inclined to be peaceful. Baron de Castine of Castine had taken his daughter in marriage. The Baron, a former colonel in the French army in Quebec, a "man of taste and education," was carrying on a very profitable trade with the Indians. It was not to his advantage to have it interrupted. He used all the wiles and arts at his command to keep his father-in-law and his tribe out of war. As Modockawando had great influence as far away as Massachusetts and Canada, his attitude had a stabilizing influence on the whole region.

Castine eventually returned to France with a fortune of 300,000 crowns. His son, "Castine, the younger," fell heir to his position and its hazards on the banks of the Penobscot. It is said that Castine, the younger possessed "an excellent character and an amiable disposition, inheriting neither the bigotry of the



French nor the ferocity of the savages" and with all the ability and resources at his command honestly tried to preserve peace with the English.

That "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself" was just as true in those remote settlements as in our day and time. The death of King Philip, the Narragansett chief, in 1676, made it necessary for many of his tribe to take refuge in the East. They fomented not a little discontent among the resident tribes, among whom there was an already growing alarm at the steady encroachment of the whites. Because of many "Cruelties and Barbarities . . . in killing Massacring and murdering, and Scalping without giving any Notice," Captain Church raised a company of volunteers to make an expedition against the "French Enemies and Indian Rebels" along the coast, declaring: "*Wee* also declare that as *wee* have made some beginnings of killing and scalping (which we have not been won't to do or allow) that we now come with a great body of English and Indians (all Volunteers) with a resolution to subdue and make sensible of your cruelties to us, by treating you after the same Manner." Their strategy was "to rest in the Day, and row in the Night; and never to fire at an Indian if they could reach him with a Hatchet, for fear of *allarming* them!" Captain Church had led the expedition that ended in the capture and death of King Philip, so he was probably not averse to doing a little mopping up.

Late in the century, the Massachusetts Colony and the Duke of York came to grips over the control of the region. While under the control of the latter, Pemaquid was ruled to be the only port of entry to the eastward of the Kennebec. Because of this edict little mention is made of the St. Georges River for many years. In 1678 a craft with her cargo, the property of John Alden of Boston, was seized for unlawfully trading "in these parts." Pleading ignorance of the Duke's sovereign rights, the court dismissed the case and the property was restored.

The trading post on the Georges and those at *Matinicus* and Monhegan were destroyed by the Indians in 1678 and for nearly half a century the red man held undisputed sway over his rightful domain. Sir Edmond Andros, governor of New England, renewed hostilities when he made a piratical attack on Castine in

1688. The *Tarratines* then went on the war path, giving and asking no quarter. William and Mary, coming to the throne of England in 1689, the war became known as "King William's War." To add to the excitement, the famous Captain Kidd was darting in and out among the many inlets of the coast, and, according to legend, burying treasure in just the kind of places where one would expect to find buried treasure.

About 1702, after the coronation of Queen Anne, war flared again. Not much happened in the immediate vicinity of the Georges, but an unfortunate incident at Castine brought about repercussions that did eventually involve the whole region. An ill-advised or ill-motivated group of British, posing as friends, visited Castine and robbed him of "great spoil." This, after he and his father both had done everything that they could to hold the savages in restraint. English authorities were much distressed and promised redress, but the mischief had been done. The Indians, filled with resentment at this outrage to their ally, wreaked their vengeance far and wide on innocent victims as blameless as was Castine. Hostilities continued until 1713 when a treaty following the treaty of Utrecht, which gave Acadia to the British forever (a long time), was made with the Indians. The following year, Queen Anne died and King George I succeeded to the throne.

In an attempt to pacify the natives and if possible win them from the French it was decided to make another attempt to "Gospelize" them. A salary of £150 per annum was offered any minister who would come to this frontier for that purpose. Rev. Joseph Baxter came from Medfield, Massachusetts and with Lieut.-Gov. Dummer held a conference at Georgetown, named in honor of the new sovereign, near the mouth of the Kennebec. Eight chiefs attended the conference bearing British flags. With great suavity, Dummer tried to explain to these simple folk the relations existing between them and their new sovereign, telling them that it was their duty to honor and obey him and to treat his subjects, the British, as they themselves would like to be treated; and that since the king's settlements and forts were as much for their benefit and safety as for that of the British, they were not to be molested. Rev. Mr. Baxter was introduced as a



“man of God” who would teach them how much superior the Protestant religion was to the Catholic, and a Bible was offered them.

The Indians asked for time to think the matter over. The following day they agreed to be loyal and obedient subjects of the king if they liked the offers he made them. As to the English settlements, they cautiously said, “We embrace the English that have settled among us in our bosom, but desire no further settlements made—as we cannot hold them *all* in our bosom.” Of Rev. Mr. Baxter they said, “it would be strange not to love a man who came from God,” but they couldn’t accept his Bible and his teachings because they might displease God if they gave up the teachings they had already had.

The governor was so sharp with them for their lack of compliance that they departed from the conference leaving the British flag behind. However, after sleeping upon it over night, they returned next day and agreed to allow the English to nestle in their bosom a while longer. Later, Baxter, the “man of God,” resided at St. Georges for a time.

About 1720 “Ten associates” under the leadership of John Leverett, President of Harvard College, took up the so-called “patent” of the region, which was divided into thirty shares, one of which was controlled by two brothers, Jonathan and Cornelius Waldo of Boston.

The Waldo brothers, as tenants in common, were under mutual obligations to procure settlers for two towns of eighty families each, and make preparations for their accommodation. This arrangement links us with our own day. In preparation for the coming settlers two blockhouses with a covered passage leading to the water’s edge all surrounded by a palisade, were built near the spot where later General Henry Knox’s mansion was to stand. The blockhouses were of enormous hewn logs, and, except for loopholes, laid in a solid wall, 100 ft. square and 16 ft. high surmounted by cannon. A saw mill was erected on the creek (*Crick*) to this day called “Mill River.” The patentees also erected about thirty houses, brought in cattle and bought a sloop to convey the aforesaid eighty families to their homes in the wilderness. The settlement was named *Lincoln*. The project so aroused the

hostility of the Indians that a garrison had to be maintained to ward them off.

Deeming it a work needed for the general defense the Massachusetts Colony at the request of the proprietors, made it a public garrison, sending a re-inforcement of forty-five men and two sloops. The following year the support was withdrawn. The lower house of The General Court voted: "that it is not for the service of the Province to support the Block-house at the George's River, and that no further pay or subsistence be allowed to the men that are posted there." At that time a soldier's monthly pay, paid in paper money at sixty percent discount, was £7 (\$12.44) for a captain, ranging downward to £2 (\$3.55) for a private. A compromise was made and the force reduced to ten men. Learning of this, the Indians made a furious attack upon the place in June 1722. When they left, the block houses alone were left standing. The saw mill, houses, and sloops were burned. One man had been killed and six taken prisoner.

In August a French "fryer" and two of his countrymen led a larger band of Indians and furiously assaulted the fort for twelve days and nights. The garrison was able to hold out and finally the assailants withdrew. This was followed a few months later by a siege of thirty days.

The attacks by the Indians and counter attacks by the white men continued several years. The gravity of the Indian attacks was greatly increased because they had captured boat after boat until at one time they had a fleet of twenty-two in which to make their assaults.

The Indians, growing tired of a war in which they were slowly but surely being worsted, from time to time made overtures for peace. Thinking a trading-post in the station might ameliorate the situation, one was established in the block house. It was stocked with blankets, beads, knives, axes, tobacco, rum, meal, pork, and fish. One sympathetic truck-master having been withdrawn, the Indians, feeling the need of social security, complained saying, "But it is very strange to us now that the truck-master is come away, the door is fast; the key is turned on the lock and we cannot get anything now, nor can our wives and children get the necessaries of life."



The physical wants of the Indians being thus provided for, the attention of the Government was then directed to measures for their moral improvement as well as that of the garrison. Accordingly the Rev. Moses Hall was sent into the wilderness as a chaplain. There were also an Indian interpreter and a physician, Urian Angier, stationed here. The physician's practice was not lucrative even for those times, as he received from the Great and *Generous* Court £6, 2s.6d for one year and one month's services! That included payment for Sundry Medicines and Cures—and there was no sandwich counter to augment his income.

From time to time the Indians protested the sale of rum to their young men, and when Gov. Belcher visited the post in 1732 they personally complained to him that “sour meal and *damnified* tobacco” were being palmed off on them, that the smith did not mend their arms properly, and that no provision being made to house them they had to lie out in the rain and cold. In addition to these impositions two of their dogs had been killed for merely barking at a cow! Gov. Belcher smoothed out their wrinkled brows with fair promises, goodly presents, and a toast to the King's health!

For over a decade unsettled conditions prevailed. No settlement, house, or vessel at anchor in these eastern parts was safe from aggression. About 1735, however, the outlook brightened a bit. Twenty-seven men of Scotch-Irish extraction from Londonderry or vicinity came to the region to confer with Samuel Waldo, who had come into possession of the patent. The following year, with others, all from the north of Ireland, they came to that part of the river that “trended westward” and formed the “Upper Settlement of St. George's.” The “Lower Settlement” extended to the mouth of the river, including territory on both banks. The settlers were an intrepid lot, capable of facing almost any dilemma. Their parents before them and even some of them as children had endured the horrors of the siege of Londonderry. That grim experience followed by economic pressure had made life in Ulster almost unbearable, so they had sought refuge in a new world. They did not hope for nor demand a life of ease. All they asked was a foothold in the stern wilderness. Given that, they would carve out their own destiny.

Of the settlement at that time Cyrus Eaton says: "One hundred and five years had now elapsed since the first trading house was established on the banks of this river; yet, with the exception of the mill, fort, and perhaps a few houses in its immediate vicinity, no marks of civilization existed; no inroads were made upon that yet unbroken forest; which over the whole country sheltered the moose and the Indian alike from the scorching suns of summer and the howling storms of winter." Then, too, there were "witches and warlocks and things that cry 'boo' in the meadows," horrible creatures that made the night hideous—frogs!

With the coming of the Scotch-Irish settlers life on the river began to change. Lots were laid out, each with a river frontage, and log cabins built. Mr. Waldo had already built a lime-kiln within the limits of the present town of Thomaston and erected a saw mill at Mill River. The settlers agreed to pay an annual rental of one peppercorn a year and to "clear and subdue" four acres of land within two years. On the other hand, Waldo agreed to take at convenient landings all the cord wood they could not otherwise dispose of at the price of seven shillings a cord. He also "stood ready" to exchange for any cord wood and staves (barrel) that they might get out, boards, nails, provisions and other necessities.

The task of opening up the new settlement was greatly hampered by the depredations and many uncertainties incident to the French and Indian Wars. Not only the local Indians, the Penobscots and the Tarratines, harassed the settlers, but Indians from Canada, Indians alone, and Indians in hordes led by French Jesuits swooped down upon the scantily protected settlement. For long periods all the settlers were obliged to live within the block houses. For nearly every man who farmed or cut wood, there had to be another to stand guard with a rifle and all had to be ready to repair to the fort at a moment's notice. Under such stress and such untoward circumstances, though there might be some commerce on the river there could be little established industry.

An amusing incident occurred at this juncture. One Henry Alexander was appointed captain at the fort. To celebrate his election he provided a gallon of rum for the masculine contingent and a pound of tea for the ladies. Going into the fort to see



how the "tea" was progressing he learned that his wife had served the steeped leaves with butter and had thrown the "broth" away, saying, "That is good for nothing, so I poured it out, and the very pigs would not drink it."

When war broke out between the French and the English in 1744, except for the garrison, the colony was practically abandoned. Some went with the expedition to Louisburg, others to Massachusetts to live with friends until hostilities should cease. At this time a third block house was built at the *Narrows* to protect the few settlers who decided to remain on the upper stretches of the river.

Thoroughly aroused by the victory of the British over the French at Louisburg, a horde of frenzied savages from as far away as Canada, Cape Sable, and St. Johns swooped down upon the little frontier settlement on the Georges in July 1745, burning houses, killing or "*captivating*" one settler and killing hogs, horses, and fifty or sixty head of cattle. As it was suspected that some of the Penobscot Indians had had a hand in this onslaught the British demanded of the Sachems of the tribe that the ring-leaders be delivered up to them or else. The Indians refused to comply. War was declared and the British went out literally to get their scalps, offering a bounty of £100 to any soldier and £400 to any civilian who could produce the gruesome trophy. The House of the General Court voted that ten whale boats provided for a contemplated expedition against the Indians be financed by deducting the cost from the bounties on scalps and captives! Even the ministers whose duty in part it was to "*gospilize* the Indians" did not refuse to accept their share of the "scalp money."

In or near this settlement, as was true everywhere, there were a few Indians who were friendly, but the aroused settlers ruthlessly hunted them one and all. One bereft squaw was given a generous present of a  $7/8$  blanket at the close of the war to recompense her for the loss of her spouse, an innocent victim of the assumption that the "*only good Indian is a dead one.*"

At the close of the war in 1749, the settlers returned to find their houses uninhabitable or destroyed by the Indians. It is interesting to note that the Indians had taken the lead sashes out of the meeting house windows to melt down for bullets, but had

carefully piled up the glass. The simple houses were soon restored and once again the settlers fell to and began to get out cord wood and staves. Fishing and trading revived. About 1753 Waldo went to London to attract settlers to the Georges and among the various attractions he offered prospective settlers was that of "timber . . . of oak, beech, maple, elm, birch, and all kinds of fir or pine, all of which were in such demand in Boston as to pay for clearing the lands, and well adapted for making pot and pearl ashes." He agreed, also, to aid them in procuring cattle, horses, grain, with all necessary victual, seed and whatever else needed, at prime cost. He offered, at the same time, to transport at his own expense, house and ship carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, lime-burners, brick-makers, and ingenious millwrights, and those acquainted with building wooden dams across rivers, and to give them employment.

Once more the fisherman might take to his boats and the trader resort to his business. It really began to look like "peace in our time." But, no, there was a slight murmur—a murmur that if unheeded, might grow into a mighty roar. The white fathers in their zeal to extend the arts of civilization were again encroaching on the red man's land. The tentative understanding that the farmer go "as far as salt water flows" and there stop, leaving the vast interior of the country to the red man was being ignored and the Indians wanted a showdown. In the autumn of 1752, a conclave was called at the fort to see if matters couldn't be settled satisfactorily to everyone. Six hogsheads of bread and six barrels of pork were provided for the invited guests.

Representatives came from most of the eastern tribes. To be sure the main question to be settled was that of encroachment, but there were other gravels in the Indians' moccasins. Prices at the post were too high, so high in fact that some of the neighboring tribes went to Albany to do their trading. Pretty hard to satisfy a customer who was willing to walk that distance to get a right price. Then, the Christian white men were selling too much fire-water to the squaws and sons of the heathen red man, and the red man asked that it be stopped. (The beginning of the prohibition movement in Maine.) Finally, those tent dwelling, trail blazing, stream swimming denizens of the forest asked that



a house be built for their accommodation when they came to the fort to trade; that a causeway be built across the meadow; and a bridge, over the "Crick" (Mill River)!

The white men listened and since the demands were within reason promised to do all they could to solve the various problems. As a token of good faith salutes were fired from the guns at the fort and from the guns on the provincial sloop, three cheers were given by the white and red men together, presents were exchanged and everyone seemingly felt better for the pow-wow. The officers of the fort and the few civilians returned to their daily round of affairs and the Indians departed, apparently satisfied with the results of the conference and believing that at last the white man would keep his promises.

The fly in the ointment, however, was the temporary nature of satisfaction derived from victuals and drink. Bread and pork could satisfy for a time, but as a permanent basis for peace they were wholly inadequate. In one short year, it was necessary to hold yet another conference. It proceeded in much the same manner as the preceding one. Thirty chiefs signed the compact. The health of King George was drunk and this time—indulging in wishful thinking—the hope was expressed that the two peoples might be friendly "as long as the sun and moon endure." Cyrus Eaton naively comments, "Human resolutions, however, are less enduring than heavenly bodies."

Shortly after these solemn vows of friendship and respect for each other's rights, Waldo defaulted his part of the pledge by bringing in German settlers at Waldoboro and Scotch at Stirling (part of Warren) in direct violation of the pledge to leave the territory above tide water to the Indians. Little wonder that the Indians were resentful and ready once again to go on the war-path. To meet the danger of new aggression it was necessary to repair and strengthen the fort. A dozen or more of iron cannon were mounted on the fort or on an outwork at the water's edge, completely commanding the river. The truckhouse at the foot of Wadsworth Street which was protected by a palisade was given added re-enforcements. In addition to the soldiers stationed at the fort, scouts or "rangers" were employed to scour the woods and surrounding countryside for Indian "vermin."

It was at this time that "Tom-Kill-the-Devil" Kilpatrick erected the third block house up river at the *Narrows*. It is believed he held the "honor" of killing the last Indian to be shot within the limits of the town. The Indians had come to get his scalp. Kilpatrick was one of the unruly colonists who carried on a personal warfare of his own in violation of pacts made at the fort.

Three other blockhouses were built on the river; one above and two below the main settlement. Capt. Burton, in what is now Cushing, built his of stone. That these preparations were not amiss was later shown when what is usually known as *the* French and Indian War broke out soon after.

"All there was of Thomaston, at this time, consisted of the fort and the blockhouses along the river; a cleared space in their rear, widening during the war and extending before its close, from the present burying ground to the Prison quarry, backed by an unbroken forest of heavy growth interrupted only by the narrow glades at the fresh Meadows of Mill River and salt Marsh of the Wessaweskeag; a large barn standing at some little distance northeasterly from the fort near where the Congregational meeting house now stands; a log school house on the bank between the fort and block house . . . and a few deserted log houses farther up toward Oyster River and Watson's Point. Those of the settlers who were able to bear arms (at that time all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty) were organized into companies, and for a great portion of the time during the war drew pay and rations, which formed the principal means of support for their families."

To eke out the scanty rations, gardens manured with rock weed were planted, all hands—men, women, and children assisting in the work. The potato was chiefly cultivated. This was a wise choice, not only for its food value, but because the crop growing underground was less likely to be destroyed. While the work of cultivation or harvesting was going on at least one armed man stood guard and Newfoundland dogs roamed about as "rangers" to scent out savages who might be lurking in the offing. If a general alarm was sounded everyone scurried back to the fort as fast as his legs could carry him.



In 1755 the General Court declared war on all the eastern tribes except the Penobscots. In their dealings with the chiefs the officials at the fort tried to differentiate between the hostile tribes and the friendly Penobscots, but the rank and file of the settlers knew no difference nor apparently did they try to discriminate. The result was several regrettable incidents that could not be satisfactorily explained by the whites nor condoned by the red men. The most lamentable was the murder of an Indian squaw, Margaret Moxa, her infant child, and intoxicated husband by a party of rangers from Newcastle. Margaret was a great favorite at the fort and her death was greatly lamented. As she lay dying she held up her infant son, whom she called "Nit," begging her slayers to carry him back to the fort for protection. Instead, the brutal slayer, snatched the child from it's mother's arms and exclaiming, "Every *nit* will make a louse," dashed its brains out. The offender was tried for murder, but acquitted. After repeated acts of perfidy on the part of the whites, the Indians took vengeance into their own hands and began acts of reprisal, which led to a declaration of war.

In 1758 word was received in Boston that the French and Indians were going to attack and wipe out the settlements on the Georges. Accordingly, the ship *King George* and the sloop *Massachusetts* were at once dispatched to the river with recruits and ammunition. The assistance was most timely, for within a few hours after leaving the re-enforcements a band of French and Indians, to the number of four hundred, made a furious onslaught upon the fort. Thanks to the re-enforcements they were able to ward off the enemy without a single casualty on the part of the besieged. Enraged by the rebuff the Indians vented their spite on everything outside the fort that they could lay their hands on, digging potatoes with their tomahawks and killing sixty head of cattle.

The following year, 1759, Waldo died. He had gone up the Penobscot River with Gov. Pownal to erect a fort (Fort Pownal) when he was stricken with "an Apoplexy." His interest in the Waldo Patent went to his two sons and two daughters, one of whom, Hannah, was the wife of Thomas Flucker of Boston and the mother of Lucy Flucker who later married General

Henry Knox. Lucy Flucker Knox became sole heir to the vast Waldo domain when the Tory family sided with the British at the time of the Revolution.

The year 1762 is noteworthy because it was then that the garrison was disbanded and the furnishings of the fort sold at auction or, one might say "liquidated," as the former commander was licensed to set up a tavern in the fort for the sale of spirituous liquors. New settlers came, and the first frame house was raised on Christmas day by Oliver Robbins on what is now the St. George road. The house is still standing. The arts of industry and peace: lumbering, quarrying, lime-burning, fishing, ship-building, and commerce were pursued as vigorously as it was possible for them to be pursued in a settlement which numbered only one hundred and seventy-five souls from the head waters to the mouth of the Georges!



## *The Honorable John North*

IN THE EARLY DAYS of exploration and settlement in this country it was a common custom to give grants of land to persons who distinguished themselves in the King's service. On the face of it, such a grant seemed a generous gesture on the part of the sovereign and an acceptable gift by the recipient. If to give away something that does not belong to one is generous, then such donors were generous. In the document conveying the gift was usually the phrase "to have and to hold." If the recipient of the gift was able to hold it, then the gift might indeed be an acceptable one.

The holders of patents and landed proprietors, usually absentee owners, would have been in a sorry plight in the face of rival claims and savage onslaughts if it had not been for the adventurous and brave men who were willing to risk their lives in order to protect the property of others. One such soldier of fortune was Capt. John North, self-styled, in his will the "Hon. John North." North came to the Georges with the first Scotch-Irish settlers in 1736. He had resided at Pemaquid before coming to the Georges. At Pemaquid he had been in command of Fort Frederic and during his term a disgruntled applicant for aid petitioned the governor and council for North's removal saying, "Oswego is gone, Ticonderoga is gone, and two old squaws could take Pemaquid." The complainant being a disreputable, undeserving man, was not successful in bringing about Capt. North's dismissal.

North having acquitted himself well at Pemaquid was made commander of Fort St. George's in Thomaston when Capt. Bradbury retired in 1757. The French and Indian War was still going on. The countryside according to "Tom-Kill-the-Devil" of the upper fort, was still in "Dificult And dangerous circumstances,"

the woods round the garrison "crawling with lurking Enemies," who were "Killing and *barberously sculpting*" their captives. Capt. North not only had to contend with the Indians and everything that Tom-Kill-the-Devil, had to contend with, but he also had to contend with Tom-Kill-the-Devil besides. Because of the latter's impetuosity and lack of co-operation it was difficult to shape and maintain a definite Indian policy. North would make promises and give safe conduct to the natives only to have Kilpatrick or some other hot-head take matters into his own hands and wreak private vengeance on an unsuspecting victim. North with his family had been living in town and under the protection of the fort for some time before his elevation to its command. The strength of the fortification was later reduced, but he retained his command until his death in 1763.

He was possessed of personal as well as military courage and evidently was tactful in his public dealings. His personal courage was shown by the bravery with which he faced his would-be defamer who threatened to shoot him if he stepped ashore to survey the island occupied by the man as a squatter. Completely cowed by North's coolness in landing in spite of his curses and threats, his intended assailant suddenly became weaker than one old squaw. Putting away his gun, he simply said "Ah! Johnny, is it you?" allowing the survey to be made without further molestation.

Just what constitutes courage in family affairs it is hard to say. What we call courage and pluck in public affairs we are often wont to consider obstinacy, wilfulness and other ugly traits in private life. North had an only daughter, Mary, probably a favorite, as her father did not like the man she married and was continually at cross purposes with him. The son-in-law in question was a man named McKechnie, who handed out medicaments with one hand and did surveying with the other, a physician and practical surveyor. Strange combinations of professions in those early days! North, an experienced surveyor of no mean ability, had helped "run out" the boundaries of the Pemaquid patent, and had surveyed the Kennebec for the Plymouth Company. His lieutenant and son-in-law, the young upstart, having had less experience might have been more subservient had he been a less



technical calculator. It is possible that North didn't "cal'late to be pleased anyway" and that nothing the young man might have done would have satisfied him.

That the other members of the family accepted Mary's husband is shown by the fact that after Capt. North's death her older brother remained on friendly terms with McKechnie and the whole family settled near each other up country, in Augusta.

It was in 1758 while Capt. North was in command of Fort St. Georges that the French conspired with the St. John, Penobscot, and Passamaquoddy Indians to wipe out the entire settlement. The onslaught was ferocious, but thanks to the decision of the government to "*Doo Sumthing* to prevent our Ruin by a Savage Enemy," Gov. Pownal of Massachusetts had personally delivered re-enforcements and military supplies a few hours before, enabling North to repulse them. For this timely act Gov. Pownal received the personal commendation of the King. During the attack one woman was captured, but allowed to escape. The greatest loss was the sixty head of cattle belonging to the settlers which were killed because the marauders could find nothing else on which to wreak their vengeance.

North was an able and popular leader of the settlement and a capable commander of the fort. He maintained satisfactory relations with the Indians, too, so far as trade was concerned. He did not, however, altogether escape the finger of suspicion concerning the fairness of that trade. Some of the settlers thought he used his high position to feather his own nest, by unlawful trading with the natives, an old, old story, yet ever new. He was certainly in a tight place between his canny Scotch neighbors and the crafty Indians.

That he was a man of property for his day is proven by the items in his will. He left the proper amount to his wife and two sons, but because of "undutifulness in marrying a man not to my good liking," he cut off his daughter, Mary with "ten pounds and no more." The wealth from which she was cut off consisted of:

"104 oz. of plate at 6s. 11d. per oz.; 92 lbs. pewter; 16 lbs. old pewter; one pair gold buttons, weighing 5 pwt. 16 grs.; 1 suit

broadcloth clothes, £8; 1 blue coat; 1 red jacket; 1 black ditto; 1 suit *duroy* clothes; 1 Beaver-cotton coat; 1 great coat; beaver hat, 16s.; 2 pairs breeches, (1 of leather and 1 cloth); 5 ruffled shirts, 17s. 4d.; tobacco tongs; 3 two-hour glasses; 1 set surveying instruments; 1 doctor's box; 1 barrel of powder £10; 1 drum, 6s.; bullets and shot 14s.; *small skins*, £1, 1s. 4d.; 5 lbs. beaver, poor, at 5s.; 151 lbs. of feathers at 1s. 4d. per pound; 98 gallons of rum at 2s.; 3 barrels at 3s. each; 3 cows, £12; 1 cow at £3, 12s.; and one Negro man named *Esdrum*, with bedding and clothes, £40!"

Concerning this inventory Eaton says: "This last item of property may seem somewhat startling to modern ears and in this latitude, but the doctrine of popular rights and human equality was not publicly avowed until the commencement of the Revolution, some years later; and nothing was more common, among the more pretending of aristocratic families, than the purchase of a negro man or woman, as the most unequivocal mark of rank and distinction."

That North was a man of recognized rank and distinction is shown by the fact that in addition to commanding the fort he also held a commission as justice and was one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas for Lincoln County, which at that time included Thomaston.

This "town father" was buried in the old graveyard near the fort that was later desecrated not by the Indians, but by "Lady" Knox who had the stones destroyed and the graves levelled off. The fort was gone, its commander was dead, his bones were "dust, his good sword rust." The only person who could have prevented the desecration was Gen. Knox and he was away. One bit of identification only was left, a leaden grave marker in the shape of a heart set in a stone. Even that was later snatched by some vandal and run into bullets. Mrs. Knox and the other unknown vandal were never hailed before any court other than the court of public opinion. One need not ask for the verdict. North's grave might be levelled off, his stone broken, and the marker run into bullets but neither Mrs. Knox nor any number of vandals could rob him of his fair and unblemished record as military officer and magistrate.



Of North's two sons, Hon. Joseph, the elder, held a Colonel's commission, sat in the Provincial Congress as a representative from *Gardinerstown*, and was judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Lincoln and Kennebec Counties. William, the youngest child, took an active part in the Revolution under Baron Steuben, rising to the rank of General. Later he sat in the United States Senate.

## *Col. Mason Wheaton*

AFTER THE CLOSE of the French and Indian Wars, when it was comparatively safe to do so, many new settlers came to the region of the Georges. Among those was Mason Wheaton. Arriving the year Capt. John North died it was not long before he assumed the leadership that eminent commander of the fort had so long enjoyed. North was a soldier first and a civilian afterward; Wheaton primarily a business man. To be sure he did hold successively the titles of Major and Colonel, but they were bestowed upon him for service as a vigilante, not because he was a soldier by profession. Armed with a lease from the proprietors of the Waldo Patent, Wheaton took over the management of the fort-farm lime quarry which later became the State Prison quarry. With two other partners he established a store at the fort. Later the store was moved to the vicinity of the block house near the foot of Wadsworth St. When one of his partners was given a license as innholder, a tavern was established at the fort where fire arms gave way to fire-water.

Notwithstanding Wheaton's prominent position in the settlement his first home was a log cabin built near a spring on the fort farm. In all probability it was a one-room cabin as were all the local dwelling houses of that day. The locally famous spring near which the house was built was later called *Knox Spring*. In the course of time and in a more sophisticated day, this spring became the source of water for the town pump. With advance in business and social prestige, Wheaton's log cabin gave way to a more pretentious home which boasted three rooms and an entry. Although it was a one story house, probably planked, not framed, it was long known as the *Old Castle*, a designation which speaks volumes for the other houses in the settlement. The house stood on the east side of what is now Wadsworth Street. When

General Peleg Wadsworth was given command of the region from the Piscataqua to the St. Croix and came to Thomaston to take up his duties, Major Wheaton graciously allowed him to establish his headquarters in this *Old Castle*. While quartered there Wadsworth was attacked and captured by the British and carried off to *Bigyduce* (Castine). From the time of Wadsworth's residence in it the house was known as the *Wadsworth house*. In later years it was enlarged, but finally went to ruin and was torn down.

In addition to, and in conjunction with his lime industry, Wheaton carried on a coasting trade in his own vessels. His ventures in that line of endeavor being subject to all the dangers and hazards that beset the shipping of that day, he naturally became an active participant in the formation of a "Committee of Safety and Correspondence" for the Georges at the outbreak of the Revolution. He was chosen chairman and correspondent of the committee, one of the self-imposed duties of which was to regulate all the shipping entering or leaving the river.

As a reliable citizen he was also entrusted with about ten pounds of powder when that precious commodity was distributed among the settlers for safe keeping. He is also credited with having put through the measure that brought about the incorporation of the Town of Thomaston in 1777. At the time of its incorporation the town polled only forty-seven persons possessing taxable property and ten who paid merely a poll tax. It is said however that, "Being from the same region and mostly connected by marriage or otherwise, they formed a friendly and congenial neighborhood."

Wheaton issued the warrant for the first town meeting "to assemble Monday the 21st day of April next at ten of the clock in the forenoon at the Dwelling House of Oliver Robbins" (on the St. George Road). History does not say what Mrs. Robbins said when she heard of the proclamation. Town meeting at her home in the middle of the forenoon on wash day! Ten to one it assembled in her kitchen, too, since that was the customary family living room of that period. The meeting was called to order. David Fales was elected moderator. He immediately moved that the meeting adjourn to his home. Although it is con-



trary to parliamentary law for a chairman to make a motion, not one dissenting voice was raised against the irregularity. Why? There was a tavern in the town and David who was "skilled in the manufacture of flip, punch, and other alcoholic drinks" kept the tavern in his home! Mrs. Robbins probably gave a sigh of relief when she saw the crowd troop out of the house for that refreshing interlude. That first town meeting must have been a sober and serious affair.

Sometime between the organization of the "Committee of Safety and Correspondence" and the calling of the first town meeting Major Wheaton had risen to the rank of Colonel. When the aforesaid town meeting finally settled down to business it elected a complete roster of town officials, three honors falling to Colonel Wheaton, who became a member of the first board of selectmen, the first town treasurer, and the first sealer of weights and measures. Very appropriately likening the inauguration of those first town officers to the launching of a ship a writer says, "Thus, having been duly named and launched upon the political waters, the town was now fully manned, and ready to spread her sails to the breeze and commence her voyage into the as yet unknown ocean." In the old days refreshments were always served at a launching, so the jaunt to *Fales's* tavern was entirely in keeping with the occasion.

As a member of the board of selectmen, Colonel Wheaton was instrumental in having the town lines surveyed, in laying out new roads and repairing old ones. You who rush over the roads in swift flying autos, do you ever give a thought to those pioneers who blazed their way through the wilderness cutting trails, opening up bridle and cart paths, and laying down corduroy roads that you might one day take your ease in a palace on wheels over a six lane concrete highway?

For a time after its incorporation, as a matter of economy, the town voted "No" every time the question arose of sending a representative to the "Great and General Court" in Boston. As the Revolution progressed, however, need of representation there became more and more pressing. Colonel Wheaton had the honor of being the first person elected to represent the town as a member of that august body. He journeyed back and forth to

Boston on horseback, taking about two weeks for the trip each way.

As a member of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence, Colonel Wheaton managed to keep some of his vessels on the high seas at a time when the whole coast was infested with privateers and *shaving-mills*—small raiders—and when many other owners dared not let their vessels leave the docks. In 1780 he not only loaded a sloop with lime for Boston but, throwing personal caution to the winds, embarked on her himself. Cautiously hugging the shore, the sloop found the coast clear until in the vicinity of Harpswell where a "*shaving-mill*" darted out in pursuit. As the sloop was unarmed and was manned by only three men she was no match for her pursuers who overhauled her and took command. The captors immediately offered to let her proceed if Colonel Wheaton would pay a ransom of \$200. Scorning to be held up in such fashion the Colonel refused. Whereupon the course of the vessel was reversed as if making for Halifax.

Fortunately for Wheaton the whole encounter was observed from the shore by an alert guardsman who gave the alarm to a company of militiamen who happened to be assembled for training at that very moment. Rushing to the shore with their captain they leaped into a small fishing smack and gave the captors chase. When the fisherman suddenly hove in sight the leader who had taken over the sloop scrutinized her with his glass, then asked Wheaton to take a look and see what he could make out of her. The Colonel sensed the situation at once, but is said to have casually remarked, "nothing but a fishing smack, with two men on board, coming out of New Meadows." Wheaton was right. Only two men could be seen. Yet not wholly reassured, the leader of the pirates offered him and his companions their freedom if they would fight should the oncoming craft prove unfriendly. Again Wheaton refused and went below leaving the Tory crew to its own devices. The fishing smack came nearer and nearer.

When she suddenly rounded to her deck became alive with the armed militiamen who made a target of the sloop, killing one man and wounding several others. After that the rescuers had little difficulty in subduing all the marauders. Wheaton's



sloop was returned to him. The captives were transferred to the fishing boat and both vessels put in to New Meadows where Wheaton gratefully treated his liberators to punch, then bravely resumed his voyage to Boston. His wicked captors should have been punished. They were. As recompense he should have sold his cargo for a top-notch price. He probably received as much, but no more than the regular market price. He was fortunate to have a cargo left to sell.

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Later this same sloop, lime laden, and lying in Maple Juice Cove in the Georges River, was seized by other privateers and taken to Castine whence overtures were made for her ransom. She was left on their hands, however, as Wheaton refused to dicker with the enemy.

As the Revolution progressed, coasting became such a precarious enterprise that the Colonel, like other resourceful men of the region, turned his attention to clearing and cultivating the land. He bought a large tract in Stirlingtown, a part of Warren, where he gave employment to many men. A pioneer in so many fields, he was one of the first in the vicinity to raise Indian corn on a comparatively large scale. For that venture he chose the sunny slope of the Georges between his quarry and the river.

Being a forceful man with a strong personality and used to command, Wheaton was very outspoken and somewhat inclined to be high-handed and domineering in his treatment of others. A man, who as a child had evidently encountered his displeasure, remembered him as "a hard faced, rough-heeled, passionate, and profane old gentleman" rather incongruous adjectives to use in describing a "gentleman." In his capacity as Justice of the Peace he often was called upon to read the marriage service. One couple of most unprepossessing appearance presenting themselves for this solemn covenant were greeted with "My God! are there not paupers enough on the town already?"

Wheaton's wife having been long dead, he employed a house-keeper who was devoted to him in spite of his outbursts of temper. Being "*deef*" she sometimes drove him almost to desperation by her apparent lack of understanding. Indeed in a rage, he once picked her up and threw her into a burdock patch near the back door. Another time, while attempting to strike her with a



chair, she received the full force of the blow rather than let it smash a precious mirror. She used to excuse these tirades by meekly saying, "the Colonel was not himself."

Near the close of the Revolution Wheaton received permission from the holders of the Waldo Patent to erect grist and saw mills at the *Crick* near the present Mill River bridge. Later the mills were deeded to him by General and Mrs. Knox. In order to be nearer his new business venture he moved from the *Old Castle* to a simple log house which he erected on the west slope of *Crick Hill*. To anyone living down at the *Crick* life was mostly an up hill existence, but for the Colonel it was especially hard as he was along in years and rheumatism was getting the better of him. He was oftentime short tempered and crochety with others besides his housekeeper. One noon after a busy forenoon at the mill he was painfully making his way up the hill to his home when he met a boy with a sack of corn on his back bound for the mill. The lad had trudged all the way from the Beech Woods district with the heavy burden and was much downcast when he met the Colonel climbing the hill. When the boy meekly asked him if he would go back and grind the corn, Wheaton testily refused saying he hadn't had his dinner, he had other things to do and he couldn't be bothered. "But," pleaded the boy, my mother hasn't any meal to make bread." At the very thought of such improvidence and lack of forethought, the "Colonel began to fume and fret and swear—hoped the mill would be burnt, or carried away by the freshet—wished it were "already down to Caldwell's Island." "So do I," said the boy, "and you with it!" It is said the crochety old fellow was so pleased with this spirited reply that he went back to the mill, ground the grain, and the boy triumphantly carried the meal home to his waiting mother.

Another "first" to Colonel Wheaton's credit was that of acting postmaster. In this day of easy communication, the world being so very much with us, we find it difficult to realize how few outside contacts the Thomastonians of the latter part of the eighteenth century enjoyed. The general run of mankind of that day, not having learned that "when you once get used to it, letter writing is as easy as skinning moles," did not indulge over-

much in correspondence. Occasional letters and newspapers did come by the coasters, but they arrived with no semblance of regularity. Most of the letters were of a business nature and business had to be urgent indeed before the average person could be induced to take his pen in hand.

About the year 1790 the nearest postoffice was at Wiscasset, another seaport town about thirty miles to the westward of Thomaston. Presumably mail was brought there overland with some degree of regularity, for in 1793 a resident of Castine conceived the idea of a regular fortnightly mail service between Wiscasset and Castine. The carrier traversed his route on foot, at first using a yellow silk handkerchief for a mail bag. When the volume of business outgrew that container he graduated to saddlebags. Since Wheaton's place of business was at the Crick where the postman was obliged to cross Mill River, the mail was left with him. The title of "first postmaster" therefore rightfully belongs to him, although it was his son, not he, who was the first legally appointed postmaster. With the establishment of a legal postoffice, probably at the grist-mill in 1795, mail was received and sent by a horseback rider. It must have been a momentous occasion and a matter of public concern when the first carrier unknotted his yellow handkerchief in the presence of curious onlookers in the mill. The expression "private correspondence" certainly was not applicable at that time. It must have originated later.

Colonel Wheaton, from the time of his arrival in 1763 until the coming of General Henry Knox in 1795 was without question Thomaston's leading citizen. Nor was he completely eclipsed by the arrival of Knox. Having a well established business of his own he was one of the few citizens of the town not beholden to the General for his livelihood and whose business did not come to a standstill at the latter's death. Wheaton outlived Knox by five years. He may have been "hard-faced, rough-heeled, passionate, and profane," yet at the same time he was a diligent worker, a straightforward business man, and an able executive of public affairs who laid well the foundations of Thomaston's golden age that was to come after him.



## *Whirling into the Revolution*

“NOTHING IS SURE but death and taxes.” The chief difference is that death comes but once, while taxes are ever recurring. The early settlers on the banks of the Georges certainly carried their lives in their hands and were no strangers to sudden and violent death, but they did escape taxes until the year 1762, when a tax of £4-5s-8d. was levied on the Upper Town.

Whenever and wherever there are taxes, tax collectors are just around the corner. In those far away days when paper was scarce and a postal system non-existent, a tax bill was furnished the collector and he made the collections personally. One year the inhabitants on the eastern shores of the river received no visits from the collector because after collecting a part of the taxes the bill was lost. It was no where to be found. To make up the shortage the collector was obliged to sell a pair of steers. Later it was found that a maid living in his family had used the much sought bill to interline and stiffen a bonnet!

This initial tax of 1762 was but a prelude to another tax, the “Tea Tax” that was to change the history of this settlement, of the colonies, and of the British Empire. King George, being unwise in his day and generation, after sipping his cup of tea failed to read the grounds in the bottom of the cup. Had he done so he might have foreseen the disastrous defeat which was to completely overtake the British arms. Instead he insisted not only on taxing tea, but on holding the colonists’ noses while he poured the detested brew down their throats. The contents of the cup the colonists in turn compelled him to drink was entirely of his own brewing.

Two young men from the Georges River had a hand in the episode which started the ball rolling that whirled into the American Revolution. Benjamin Burton of the Lower Town and Capt.



James Watson of the Upper Town happened to be in Boston that December night, 1773, when the famous meeting was held in the Old South meeting-house to protest the tax on tea. When the cry, "tea party, tea party," rent the air, Burton, with a party of men disguised as Indians, rushed to the wharf where the tea laden vessels were swinging at their moorings. Ripping open the hatches of one of the ships and dropping into the hold he fastened the sling upon chest after chest until the last of the three hundred forty-two had been thrown overboard. Capt. Watson helped break open the chests after they were tossed out, using a "negro hoe" for the purpose. As proof of his participation he filled the pockets of his pea-jacket with the contraband that was floating like scum on the water.

The Tea Party was more or less of a lark for those who took part in it. Even had they foreseen the consequences they probably would not have desisted. When the Boston Port Bill was passed however, Capt. Watson, for one, immediately felt the effects of his enthusiasm or indiscretion whichever one chooses to call it. As commander of the *Sally*, a coaster plying between the Georges and Boston he, like every other mariner, was barred from the port. One authority says, "so stringent were the regulations, not a stick of wood could be brought from the islands in the harbor, nor could a barrel of flour be brought in a row boat from Cambridge; nor could even a shingle or brick be taken from one wharf to another in a skiff or a scow!"

This was a great hardship to Boston, on the receiving end, and it worked an even greater hardship to the settlement on the Georges as its chief source of revenue came from the sale of firewood in Boston, its best market. Though their business was depressed and their market cut off their loyalty to their relatives, friends and business associates in Boston never wavered. When the port was closed the coasters were obliged to sell their cargoes at Salem or Marblehead, smaller ports and less advantageous markets. There was some smuggling. Occasionally special permission was given by the port authority for the entry of a cargo. It is claimed that the aforementioned Captain Watson "duly cleared with a 'Lett Pass' at the Salem office for Boston with 30 cords of wood on the 14th of Dec. 1774 . . . the first cargo taken

into Boston after the passage of the Port Bill." Evidently the *Sally* was a staunch vessel and her captain an intrepid mariner, for he continued to ply back and forth in her for several years after the outbreak of the Revolution.

Henry Knox, then a bookseller in Boston, later Thomaston's most distinguished citizen, wrote letters to business houses in London and to others with whom he had business connections protesting the Port Bill and prophesying that "the New Acts . . . will, I perfectly believe, make great difficulties." Knox was already married to Lucy Flucker, daughter of the Provincial Secretary under General Gage. The "great difficulties" soon followed and Knox fearlessly aligned himself with the *cause* that was to bring him fame and his country its freedom. It was also the indirect cause of his coming to Thomaston, for his wife's family being Tories, lost their claim to the Waldo patent. When the colonies came off victorious, the title to what remained of the Waldo patent reverted to her.

In retaliation for the Port Bill the self-martyred colonists in the region of the Georges banded together and signed a "Non-Consumption agreement or solemn league and covenant" by which they pledged themselves, "not to import, buy, or use any British manufactures or other goods . . . to break off all trade, commerce, and dealings whatever with the island of Great Britain . . . until the Port or Harbor of Boston shall be opened, and we are fully restored to the free use of our constitutional and charter Rights." Men, women and children convened on a publicly appointed "Day of Fasting and Prayer" and signed the document one and all.

Since there was no properly constituted authority to carry on the government a "Committee of Safety and Correspondence" was appointed by the settlers to function in that capacity.

The committee arbitrarily took into its hands matters of defense, of taxation, of search and seizure (of tories or persons '*adspected*' of being tories) declaring that anyone "that shall make parties against the committee or their orders shall be deemed tories." Sometimes "*adspected*" tories were ridden on a rail or threatened with such punishment if they hesitated about declaring themselves. Persons guilty of minor or petty offences



were punished severely as the times seemed to call for drastic action against one and all who put the common weal in jeopardy.

One Adam Teal, a resident of one of the Georges Islands was sentenced to "receive Ten Stripes of Weal Lead at a post prepared for the same" for stealing a piece of tow cloth. He must have had quite a little of the "old Adam" in him, for at another time he was similarly punished for "abducting" a salt kettle. On that occasion the magistrate ordered every man in the assembled mob to cut a rod from a bush and give the culprit a lash across his bare back as he stood tied to a tree. Everything was proceeding according to Hoyle until one of the number struck the offender with a branch of thorns, then the indignation of the crowd turned against him. Tradition does not say what punishment was meted out to him, but it has condoned his cruelty by explaining that for seven years previously he had been a virtual prisoner aboard a British Man-of-War into which service he had been impressed. There he had witnessed, perhaps had been the victim, of cruel flagellations. He is quoted as having declared that, "Of all nations I have ever heard, the English are the worst nation, except *damnation*."

As the British were dismantling forts, disarming civilians, seizing vessels, stealing cattle and committing all sorts of depredations it was incumbent on the people to defend themselves from their erstwhile protectors. A company of "Minute Men," who had the keeping of ammunition and the drum and colors, was organized under the leadership of Samuel Gregg. One of the first acts of this company was to proceed up the Penobscot to Fort Pownal and take its commander to task for allowing the British to dismantle that fort, and to demand of him a share of the small arms and ammunition still in his possession. Fort Pownal had been a comfort and consolation to the settlers on the Georges because it had served as an outpost between them and the French and Indians. With that fort gone they feared they would once more be wide open to attack from the "*Salvages*" and defenseless since their own fort had been dismantled years before. The commander gave plausible reasons for his action and generously agreed to share with the irate visitors the arms and ammunition they demanded and for which they "condescended" to give a



receipt. Later he asked for a return of the arms, claiming the Georges was better armed than Pownal. Perhaps it was. The folk on the Georges were canny Scotsmen. Fearing the British might come to seize what had been so meekly handed over to them the Minute Men divided the ammunition among reliable citizens. Some of it was stored in the meeting-house—the very house of the Prince of Peace.

A Provincial Congress having been established for mutual assistance and protection it was incumbent on the settlement on the Georges to send delegates or representatives to the same. Because of the difficulty in meeting the expenses of such delegates, for a long time this obligation was observed more in the breach than the performance. However, other offices and positions made necessary by the new state of affairs were brought into existence. Feeling need of spiritual consolation in the troubled times, the settlers at the Georges contracted for the ministerial services of one Rev. John Urquhart—a rascal if there ever was one, but he was one of their own race—his Scotch “burr” reminded them of home, and his politics was to their liking. He served them many years until his disgraceful conduct could no longer be condoned and he was dismissed. As yet there had been no separation of church and state. The appointment or the “calling” of a minister was in the same category as that of any other recognized public official. Although the Reverend Urquhart was a strict church disciplinarian he was for a time very popular, his parishioners travelling long distances on foot through the woods or coming in boatloads to attend his services. After the Battle of Bunker Hill his zeal took fire and to some of the settlers he assumed the aspect of a war monger. A few of his parishioners, thereupon, absented themselves from the services. When questioned as to their conduct, they told him, “We *dinna* like yer doctrine.” “And pray, what fault do you find with my doctrine?” “Oh, ye’re all for war and bloodshed, war and bloodshed.” “Ah, well,” said he, “come to my meeting and I’ll preach such doctrine as will suit ye!”

His counterpart in the German colony in Waldoboro was taken to task for not praying warmly enough for the cause of

the Colonial arms. He replied that it was no use, for the British had already prayed for the other side several hours earlier!

At the outset of the Revolution because of the small numbers and their exposed situation, men in this region were exempted from the draft for the Continental Army. As the war progressed, however, one, sometimes two recruits were called for brief terms of service. There were numerous volunteers, many serving with great credit to themselves and their nation. So whole hearted was their service that a few refused to accept pensions in their old age. One Conrad Heyer of Broad Bay (Waldoboro), a "seventh son of a seventh son," was one of Washington's personal body guards and was in the same boat with him at the crossing of the Delaware. Although exempted from draft the settlements were assessed in money and goods for the support of the Continental Army. In 1781 Thomaston's apportionment for the latter was "1409 lbs. of beef, three blankets, and of shoes, stocking, and shirts six pairs each."

In 1776 Warren (the upper town) was incorporated. The dwellers in the lower town for various reasons were not anxious to become a part and parcel in this civic entity. Some people heartily disliked the *minister*. How familiar that sounds! The churches had no choirs in those days, to commit "vocal villainies," so the parson had to shoulder all the blame. *Meduncook* (Friendship) was sounded out for a partnership, but the settlers there being Mayflower descendants were rather "choosey" wanting as little as possible to do with the Scotch-Irish on the Georges. They had come to Meduncook for the purpose of establishing an exclusively *English* settlement. Consequently, the settlement on the Georges had to bend to its own oars. Benjamin Burton, of Boston Tea Party fame, carried the petition to the Great and General Court in Boston (a six day journey on horseback) asking for the "dis-annexing of the Easterly part of Warren . . . and incorporating the same with the Easterly part of a plantation called St. George's . . . into a Town by the name of Thomaston." The petition was granted. At that time the township included all of what is now Thomaston, Rockland (the shore village), and South Thomaston. It is supposed to have been



named for Major General John Thomas of the Continental Army.

The first town meeting was held in the Robbins house "across the bay" and Dr. David Fales was chosen moderator and at the second meeting he was chosen clerk. The town historian says that "although the offices were seemingly incompatible he appears to have had no difficulty in the simultaneous discharge of both . . . legally and chirographically."

In addition to the usual town offices of the present day, there were the offices of *tythingman*, fence-viewers, informer of deer, hog-reeves, surveyor of boards, culler of staves, hay-ward, and sealer of leather. One of the first acts of the new town was to enlist a company of men to guard the coast and islands in Penobscot Bay from the attacks of privateers and marauding parties.

Though it is sad to relate, the British were not the only foe the Committee of Safety and Correspondence had to deal with. There were a few openly declared Tories and there were a few outlaws and traitors who took advantage of the state of war to plunder and pillage and betray their neighbors. On one of the near-by islands a prominent citizen warned his neighbors he had had word the British were coming to take their cattle, and suggested they drive them all into an enclosure he had prepared for the safety of his own herd. The British promptly came and took the cattle. The man was suspected of collusion with the enemy and to this day his name has never been cleared of the suspicion.

Local privateers as well as British preyed on what few coasting vessels dared venture upon the sea. The crews were sometimes taken as far away as Bardadoes, where they were kept in virtual slavery aboard a prison ship. One prisoner was held in irons aboard a British sloop of war for nine months. "Shaving Mills," the small boats that could dart in and out of small coves and rivers, harried the settlers almost beyond endurance. Their armed crews of six or more burned houses, destroyed salt works, ripped open feather beds, scattering their contents to the winds, and either stole or broke up teakettles. Feather beds and teakettles were among the most cherished possessions of the pioneers. One featherbed represented the accumulation of several



years' work in the plucking of fowl and the conditioning of the feathers. Iron teakettles were expensive pieces of equipment, a difficult thing for the impoverished victims to replace. Articles of value which were not in every day use were often hidden in the woods and swamps.

Down the river, on the St. George side, lived Capt. Samuel Watts, a prosperous lumberman and West Indian trader. On several of his voyages he had been unable to secure a return cargo and had been obliged to bring back bulky bags of silver. Probably some Tory neighbor informed the enemy, for one night after the children had been put to bed, the house was invaded by the crew from a *shaving-mill*, who demanded his silver. When the sacks were not immediately forthcoming the intruders ransacked the house, taking everything of value but the one featherbed on which the frightened children lay. Because of his obstinacy in defending his property, two members of the crew attempted to pull Watts from his chair to carry him to *Biguyduce*, whereupon Watts gave one of them such a blow that he fell a-sprawling in the fire-place. The enraged man sprang up asking the others to come to his assistance, but the commander of the party, evidently impressed by Watts' courageous resistance, called off the attack. He told Watts if he would come along peaceably no harm would be done him. There being no merit in further resistance Watts complied and in three weeks was exchanged and returned home.

One day, in the course of those trying times, a prosperous settler on the Penobscot Bay side of the settlement received a visit from a boyhood friend. Both had been reared at Meduncook. The visitor, coming as commander of a British privateer, seized his former chum and put him aboard his vessel as a prisoner of war. Insult was added to injury when the violently protesting victim was put in irons. In addition to the personal humiliation of capture and imprisonment, the victim's guns were confiscated, his pigs and a yoke of oxen killed and carried away, and three firkins of butter stolen. So incensed was the bound captive when he saw the loot brought aboard the vessel that he let loose against his captor a volley of his "best bad language," vowing vengeance if and when the opportunity came. In the course of time

the enemy's brig was overhauled and taken as a prize. In the darkness the master managed to escape. Because a soldier of fortune assumes risks, he often must accept misfortune. Such was the case in this instance. His brig gone, his prize lost, the bold privateer was so reduced in circumstances that after the war he was forced to accept a berth as a common sailor. His boyhood chum, hearing of this, paid him a visit "to get pay for his butter." After unmercifully beating and pummelling the man he left him half dead, saying as he withdrew "This is only the payment for my butter. The next time I shall take pay for my hogs and the next time for my oxen!"

The British being in possession of *Biguyduce* (Castine) it was decided to attempt to dislodge them, for they were constantly harrying the settlements on the Penobscot and the Georges. Coasting vessels were commandeered to carry the soldiers across the bay, when a brave, if foolhardy assault was made. It came to naught because of "military etiquette" and friction between the commanders of the sea and land forces. General Peleg Wadsworth was second in command of the expedition. The routed Continentals were obliged to flee up the river. Their vessels were practically all destroyed by the enemy. The year following this unsuccessful attack on Castine, General Wadsworth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's grandfather, was given command of the military forces in the Province of Maine. He established headquarters in Colonel Wheaton's house, *the Castle* on what is now Wadsworth St. in Thomaston. "He was empowered to raise a company of volunteers . . . and to execute martial law, ten miles in width upon all the coast eastward of the Kennebec and upon the islands." While stationed here, in pursuance of the task given him, it became his stern duty to order an execution. Aiding, abetting, harboring or intercourse of any kind with the enemy was forbidden. One Jeremiah Braun, an irresponsible creature from over Damariscotta way, had been proven guilty of either wittingly or unwittingly guiding British soldiers on a raiding expedition and was sentenced to be hanged on Limestone Hill. Many staunch patriots protested the extreme penalty, but the line had to be drawn somewhere, so this unfortunate individual was made to serve as an example.



After a few months residence, the General dismissed, subject to occasional recall as sentinels, his company of volunteers, retaining only three as a bodyguard. The house in which he was stationed was not a fort or garrison, but a primitive one-story building on the eastern side of Wadsworth Street not far from the present bridge. The nearest neighbors were across the river on Watson's Point, nearly half a mile away. His family, consisting of his wife, two children and a woman friend of Mrs. Wadsworth's were in the house with him. The place was guarded by a detachment of only six soldiers. Back of the house was a deep ravine, the bed of a brook. The British, learning of his almost defenseless position, sent an officer with twenty-five men to capture him and take him a prisoner to Castine. Coming to the "Gig" (Wessaweskeag) river in South Thomaston, they anchored their vessel there, proceeding overland to Thomaston in the dead of night. Creeping up the deep ravine back of the house they aroused a sentry on guard at the door. Hearing the crunching of the snow he gave the customary challenge "Who comes there?" but before he had time to fire, the enemy rushed upon him, disarmed him and attacked the house, shooting into the kitchen which was used as a guardroom and through the windows into the sleeping quarters of General and Mrs. Wadsworth.

For some time the General held them at bay by making good use of a "brace of pistols, a fusee, and a blunderbuss," but when the attack was renewed from the entry he was forced to defend himself with his bayonet. Betrayed by his white underclothing, he became an easy mark for the enemy who shot him through his left arm, thus forcing him to surrender. Although doors were broken, windows shattered, the house on fire, and the place covered with blood, his wife and her friend bound up his wounded arm with a handkerchief and wrapped his shoulders with a blanket before he was hurried away in the snow and bitter cold on a forced march to the Gig miles away where the English privateer was lying at anchor waiting to convey them to Castine. Not for two weeks did Wadsworth learn the fate of his family who were fortunately all safe and sound. The little five-year-old son had slept through all the commotion.



Arriving at Biguyduce (Castine) the next day, he was given surgical aid and though confined as a prisoner, was courteously treated by his captors.

Not long after, Major Benjamin Burton, who had served under General Wadsworth the previous summer, was captured and confined in the same room. In the course of time information reached them that they were to be taken to England to be tried as rebels—which meant consignment to the gallows. Understanding the significance of this, they realized that only in some bold and concerted action lay their hope of escape.

The room in which they were imprisoned was grated, the walls of the fort were twenty-feet high, with fraizing at the top and a chevaux-de-frize at the bottom. Outside the wall was a ditch, and the fort itself was located on a peninsula almost surrounded by water. Two soldiers stood guard at the door of the room, others patrolled the walls, still others guarded the gate and picketed the neck of the isthmus connecting the peninsula with the mainland. How to surmount all these obstacles and elude all these guards was a problem to tax the combined skill of a major and a general.

The grated and guarded door offered no hope of escape. Neither could they hope to make a breach in the walls or the floor. The only avenue open to them was the ceiling which was constructed of broad pine boards. Securing a small gimlet and a pen-knife, ostensibly to be used in the making of toys for whiling away the time, Burton, who was tall, managed to cut away a board in the ceiling while Wadsworth, who was short, kept him informed of the whereabouts of the guard. The board was left attached at the four corners only. The auger holes were stuffed with chewed bread.

Their opportunity came one wild night in June when a severe thunder storm forced the guards to seek shelter inside. Removing the board, Burton, after helping Wadsworth to crawl through the hole, crawled through himself. They found themselves in an upper entry-way which led down to an outside door. Imitating drunken officers they passed the guard unchallenged, made their way to the top of the parapet, and by means of blankets lowered themselves into the ditch below. Separating, they managed to

creep between the sentry-boxes unnoticed in the blinding, howling storm. Wadsworth was the first to reach an old guard house where they had agreed to wait for each other. After waiting as long as he dared, he forded the mile-wide cove alone, with the water up to his waist. Emerging, he found himself in an old road familiar to him because it had been built by his own order the year before in an attempt to capture the fort.

To his great surprise and delight he was overtaken by Burton the following morning. They providentially found a boat in which they made their way to the western bank of the Penobscot River. By the aid of a small pocket compass they traveled three days through unbroken forest to the home of a friend where General Wadsworth tarried awhile to recuperate. Burton pushed on alone to his home in Cushing. For fear of recapture by the British or the Tories, he "set out" for Boston the following day to offer his services to the army. No desirable berth being available he turned to the navy, his wide experience fitting him for duty in either arm of the service. Receiving a commission as Captain of Marines he was assigned to a 20-gun ship. While cruising off the southwest coast of Ireland the vessel was captured by the British and the crew landed and imprisoned in Cape Clear castle. Later the crew were transferred to the *old Dunkirk*, a 74-gun ship lying in some English harbor, where they were confined until peace was declared. Almost penniless and alone, Burton made his way to France, thence to America. Landing in Connecticut, he was still a long way from home, but he eventually managed to get there and "returned to the plough, to enjoy in straightened circumstances, yet with cheerful spirit, liberties and privileges no less the bounty of Heaven because they were purchased with blood."

Wadsworth soon after removed to Portland where he built the first brick house in the town. This house was for a time the home (not the birthplace) of his grandson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Several years ago, when in Portland, the author approached a fire station, in front of which several firemen were sitting in tilted-back chairs, and asked directions to Longfellow's birthplace. Very deferentially one jumped to his feet and said, "Now

let me see, there are two of them!" Evidently the brick house was one of the two!

It is said that when John Montgomery, one of Wadsworth's military guards, left him at Portland to return to Warren, Mrs. Wadsworth generously presented him a fifty-dollar bill which just covered the cost of a drink of rum and a felt hat!

Wadsworth's company was small, pathetically so, but its very presence must have acted as a deterrant to the predatory forces, for as soon as he withdrew to Portland, they quickly resumed their depredations. Because of the hazards on the high seas the citizens of the region were obliged to confine their labors to the land, to farming and the manufacture of salt. A group of men living at the *Gig* had by dint of great labor managed to buy a small vessel with the proceeds of their salt industry. The vessel was loaded with salt and sent to Boston where the cargo was delivered safely. On the return trip, however, she was seized off Monhegan by a *shaving-mill* in command of several local privateers. Her cargo, consisting chiefly of "winter stores" was brought to their own river and delivered over in payment of a debt which one of the captors owed to a wealthy neighbor and townsman! "They were honorable men, all honorable men," who believed in the payment of debts.



## *Knox Comes to Thomaston*

“In war the terror of the blazing line,  
In peace, the soul of gentleness is thine.”

—Tribute to Maj. Gen. Henry Knox  
by a contemporary

PROBABLY NO OTHER single event brought greater glory to the town of Thomaston than the coming of Major General Henry Knox. As is well known Knox had served as one of Washington's aides throughout the Revolution. One of the first acts by which he distinguished himself was the bringing of the cannon in dead of winter from Ticonderoga for the defense of Boston. As one of the defenders who had fought at Bunker Hill, Knox was well aware of the need of cannon. The farmer soldiery had used their fowling pieces to great advantage in close range fighting where they were near enough to see the whites of the enemy's eyes, but larger pieces were needed—pieces for long range firing if the Red Coats were ever to be driven out of the city.

Although Bunker Hill was not a victory for the Colonial forces some of the patriots were so confident of ultimate victory that they were foolishly inclined to belittle the strength of the enemy. One veteran of the Louisburg expedition would have Knox believe the British earthworks across Boston Neck were no more formidable than a beaver dam. Knox knew better. He knew it was going to be a tough job to oust the British and that something larger than muskets and fowling pieces would be needed to do it. But where to get them? Over on Lake Champlain, at Ticonderoga, were the cannon taken by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys “in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress,” the congress which had already made the army besieging Boston, the Continental Army.

While "the great Jehovah" would never need the guns taken in his name, the Continental Army could make good use of them, and, soon after Washington was made General-in-Chief, plans were made for Knox to go to Ticonderoga to get the sorely needed equipment. It was a stupendous task, less spectacular to be sure than Paul Revere's famous ride, but calling for just as much courage and daring. Ticonderoga is about two hundred miles from Boston, and at that time the intervening country was an unbroken wilderness. As there were no roads, the logical time for the expedition was winter when the swamps and small streams would be frozen and the uneven ground covered deep with snow. Sleds, too, were easier to improvise and to manage in the rough terrain than vehicles with wheels. When the time was ripe Knox started out almost unattended. With the aid of a few men who lived in the scattered settlements en route, strong draft horses, plodding oxen, and old New England rum he was able to accomplish his task. The guns when set up on Dorchester Heights looked so formidable to the British that General Howe was glad to evacuate the city the following March—St. Patrick's Day 1776. With him went 1,100 Tories, including the parents of Mrs. Knox. Appreciation for Knox's service was expressed by Washington and the Continental Congress by appointing him chief of artillery, a position he held until the close of the war.

While on his journey to Ticonderoga Knox met Major John Andre of the British army under most unusual circumstances. This was the same Major Andre who later as a British spy arranged with the traitor Benedict Arnold, for the betrayal of West Point. At this time Andre was a prisoner of war being taken southward to Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Knox and Andre were obliged to spend the night in the same cottage and even in the same bed. Andre who was a good scholar, an artist, a writer and in general a man of varied interests proved to be a very interesting bedfellow.

Sargent's *Life and Career of Major John Andre* describes the meeting of the two men: "Their ages were alike; they had each renounced the pursuits of trade for the profession of arms; each had made a study of his new occupation, and neither was devoid





Ship "Little" Edward O'Brien, 1863.





Top: Replica of the Knox Mansion, Thomaston. Bottom: Drawing room in Knox Mansion. Replica of original wallpaper—bookcase from Tuilleries, for Marie Antoinette.



of literary tastes and habits. Much of the night was consumed in pleasing conversation on topics that were rarely, perhaps, broached in such circumstances; and the intelligence and refinement displayed by Andre, in the discussion of subjects that were equally interesting to Knox made an impression on the mind of the latter that was never obliterated.

“When Knox a few years later was called on to join in the condemnation to death of the companion whose society was so pleasant to him on this occasion, the memory of their intercourse gave additional bitterness to his painful duty.”

Knox, whose lineage was the same as that of the great reformer, John Knox, was born in Boston in 1750 of respectable Scottish parents. His father dying early, young Henry was obliged to support his mother and brother by working as a book-binder and stationer, an honorable, but lowly calling in a Boston ruled by the aristocracy. In the early seventies when trouble began to brew with England, Knox, a fine looking young man in the twenties, became very active in various political and military clubs whose members proudly and defiantly paraded through the streets of Boston. While marching in such a parade one day, his martial bearing attracted the attention of Miss Lucy Flucker, daughter of the Provincial secretary.

Miss Lucy, like many another girl carried away by a snappy uniform, suddenly remembered that one of her books needed re-binding—or was it stationery of which she was sadly in need? What she needed was immaterial; what she wanted was an acquaintance with this dashing young patriot. She knew there was no better place in Boston where she could have both her needs and her wants supplied than in the shop managed by this same fine looking young man who marched with such a military air. Fortunately she didn't need an introduction. One can always talk with a shop-keeper, you know. So, at the first opportunity the proud young lady repaired to Knox's place of business to make a purchase. The initial transaction proving satisfactory she soon became a regular customer. It was strange how her books kept getting loose in the bindings and how often her supply of stationery needed to be replenished. The acquaintance growing out of

business across the counter soon ripened into friendship, then into a mutual regard which finally culminated in their marriage in 1774.

Such a union must have meant a great sacrifice on the part of the young lady. Her father was Secretary to the Governor appointed by the British Government; her brother was a Captain in the British Army. She had been surrounded by all the luxuries and culture that money and position could bring, and would no doubt have inherited large wealth. All these advantages she was relinquishing to marry a poor book-binder whose sympathies were strongly with his people, the rebels, and who as yet held no position of rank in the Colonial Army.

Notwithstanding her loyalty to her husband, Mrs. Knox was very sensitive to any allusion to his early occupation. On one occasion while visiting a friend her young son, who accompanied her, made free with his hostess's books. The friend, distressed by the careless manner in which the boy handled the books, urged him to be more careful. Mrs. Knox excused his conduct by saying that the boy was never checked, but allowed to do as he pleased. The hostess replied that notwithstanding that fact she could not allow her books to be ruined since her husband was not a book-binder. Mrs. Knox exhibited great indignation at what she considered a slur and immediately left the house.

Sensitive as she was to any allusions to her husband's former occupation Lucy Flucker had made her choice and she abided by it, from the very beginning sharing with him the vicissitudes of war. The night before the Battle of Bunker Hill, when she was the bride of a year, Mrs. Knox not only assisted Knox to escape from Boston in disguise, but bravely accompanied him, concealing his weapon in her mantle. During the siege of Yorktown she lived at Mt. Vernon, with whose mistress she was on very intimate terms. The son, Henry, was an infant at the time. Indeed, throughout the Revolution and for some time thereafter she must have always had an infant in arms as she became the mother of twelve children in fifteen years.

General Knox was close to Washington throughout the Revolution. He displayed great bravery at the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, and Germantown. He steadily rose in the



esteem and friendship of his chief, finally receiving from the Congress the Commission of Major General.

While the Continental Army was enduring great hardship at Valley Forge, Knox and a Captain Sargent were chosen to present to the Congress the pitiable plight of the starving and underclad soldiers. Now it happened that Knox was a stout man weighing 280 pounds and Captain Sargent was most meticulous in his dress. In the course of the hearing a member of the committee before whom the plea was being made, remarked that he had not for a long time seen a fatter man than one of the delegates nor a better dressed man than the other. Captain Sargent saved the situation by saying that the corps had sent Knox because he was the only man in the army who had an ounce of superfluous flesh on his body and the Captain himself, because he was the only one who had a complete suit of clothes.

At the final surrender of the British army at Yorktown Knox was designated by General Washington to receive the sword of Cornwallis. Even after the close of the war there were many details in various parts of the country requiring the attention of the Chief of Artillery. The prospect of still other journeys led the pleasure loving Mrs. Knox to remark, "We have been posting about over the country till we have just got settled down here in comfortable quarters and now this 'plaguey peace' has come to set us all going again."

Having served eleven years as Secretary of War both under the Articles of Confederation and under the Constitution, Knox asked to be relieved of his duties in 1795 and came to Thomaston where he held the center of the stage until his career was cut short by accidental death. Here in Maine he had come into possession of thousands of acres of land partly by purchase and partly through the inheritance of his wife who was the granddaughter of Samuel Waldo, at one time holder of the Waldo patent.

In Thomaston, Knox erected a mansion more imposing than Mt. Vernon and unsurpassed in New England. It was a three-story house, surmounted by a cupola and adorned with balustrades and piazzas. Extending from each side of the mansion, a little to the rear, was a nine-house wing forming an imposing semicircle not unlike that at Mt. Vernon. In these outside build-

ings, which included the *mews* or stables, the household occupations, such as cooking, spinning, weaving, dairying, soap and candlemaking were carried on. The setting of the mansion was ideal. With its back to the primeval forest, and surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens it proudly sat on the banks of the Georges commanding a view of eight or ten miles down the river. As one approached it from the river's mouth it must have appeared to be in the embrace of the Camden mountains. It is said that when "it first caught the eye and struck the lofty mind of Mrs. Knox as she with her husband, children, and retinue came up the river to take possession of their new abode on her ancestral domain," she was much pleased. So "elegant a creation" in so romantic a spot was exactly to her liking. "In conformity with the French taste she named the mansion *Montpelier*." This was not mere affectation on the part of Mrs. Knox. Not only she, but the whole family were much at home with the French language. The children spoke it fluently and in the General's library of over fifteen hundred books, three hundred and sixty-four of the volumes were in French.

The mansion was beautifully furnished and all its appointments were in excellent taste. Here the General and Mrs. Knox entertained lavishly; the first occasion very appropriately being an "open-house" held on the 4th of July soon after their arrival. Every one in the region was invited to inspect the residence and to partake of its "elegant hospitality." It is said that at times a hundred beds were made, an ox and twenty sheep slaughtered in a week and twenty saddle horses and corresponding carriages kept to accommodate guests and sojourners. Among the many men of distinction who were entertained under the hospitable roof were a young Englishman, Alexander Baring, who later became Baron Ashburton and head of the famous firm of Baring Bros.; the Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, the French nobleman who "had three dukedoms on his head and not a whole coat on his back"; Talleyrand, who had much to do with Napoleon's rise to power; and Louis Phillipe, later King of France.

At one time Knox invited all that were left of the Tarratine and Penobscot tribe of Indians to partake of his hospitality. They eagerly accepted the generous invitation and in childlike



simplicity staid on for days and days, taxing his hospitality to the limit, until in sheer self defense he was obliged to suggest, "Now we have had a good visit, and you had better go home."

Knox, while dignified and distinguished in his manner was yet approachable and sympathetic; his wife, on the contrary, was exceedingly temperamental, haughty, and snobbish, saving her many gifts and graces for her social equals only. Evidently not realizing that "The General's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin" she held no intercourse with her neighbors and manifested no interest in them or their affairs except when they could be of personal service to her. In fairness to her, however, let it be said that she did shine in society, and there were people besides herself who did consider her the arbiter of the social usages of her day; and that she had the friendship, admiration, and respect of George and Martha Washington. The latter, who was very domestic in her tastes as well as shy and retiring, often relied upon Mrs. Knox's wider knowledge of social usage as her famous husband did upon Gen. Knox's military advice. The gaming table, where she played for high stakes, was perhaps Mrs. Knox's greatest weakness. It is said that although in Philadelphia or New York she was received with open arms because of this propensity, in Boston conservative matrons rather dreaded her winter visits to that then staid citadel of propriety.

Occasionally Mrs. Knox carried her haughty indifference to the point of rudeness. The General was much interested in "the old Church on the Hill" in Thomaston, to which he had been a generous donor. Among other contributions was the Paul Revere bell which still hangs in its steeple. When in town he was a regular attendant at its services. Mrs. Knox, on the other hand, although she had had a carpenter change her pew to make it comfortable, seldom availed herself of the opportunity to occupy it.

One Sunday after church the General courteously invited the minister to dine at the mansion without first consulting Mrs. Knox. This procedure so often the cause of marital discord, worked out not only to his own discomfiture, but to that of his guest as well. On reaching home and entering the dining room, the General found his *lady* already seated at the table. Greeting her, he pleasantly said—we will use the words of Eaton, the local



historian, because he has told the story inimitably—‘Rise, my dear, and the parson will ask a blessing.’ She took no notice, but sat unmoved in her stateliness. He repeated his request in a more distinct, loud, and emphatic manner. Still she did not move. Then, with something of that stentorian voice which at the battle of Trenton rose above the tempest, he repeated, ‘Rise!—my—dear!—the parson is going to ask a blessing!’ This being also without effect, the blessing was asked, and the dinner partaken of without any allusion to the circumstance.”

Mrs. Knox has been likened to the dove from Noah’s Ark because when she took the air in her coach, the only one in the vicinity, she never set foot upon dry ground until she returned again to the mansion. On one occasion when the coach broke down she preferred to stand in the deep mud rather than accept the hospitality of a kindly neighbor. Another time when she was obliged to take passage to Boston on a coasting vessel, she staid in her carriage, there being no cabin accommodations, speaking to no one but her servants throughout the voyage, not even looking after the children, who were running all over the ship from stem to stern because the nursemaid was too seasick to look after them. These peculiarities of the lady in question were of minor consequence and were lightly passed over when they concerned herself only, but when in the absence of her husband, the General, she caused the removal or destruction of all the stones in an ancient cemetery near the mansion, the feeling against her was bitter. When the General learned of it he is said to have torn his hair and to have poured out hearty execrations, but that could neither atone for her vandalism, nor enhance her popularity.

General Knox not only possessed a keen wit himself but he enjoyed the witticisms of others. On being introduced to a man by the name of Calef (pronounced Calf) he exclaimed, “Calf, calf! Surely your mother was not a cow?” To the delight of the General quickly came back the retort “No, neither was my father *an ox*.”

Knox had as general foreman a man named Gleason who was very efficient and who relieved the General of many of the troublesome details of his great estate. On one occasion the General returned from Boston with a large itemized order for lumber

written in his very careless hand. The employee to whom the order was given, unable to decipher it, took it to Knox himself for translation. Knox ordered him to take it to Gleason. "I have," said the foreman, "and he can't read it." Knox glanced at the paper and exclaimed, "No, nor the devil couldn't read it!" Gleason despite his efficiency was subservient to Knox and at first agreed with every kind of suggestion the General might make. Thinking to teach him a lesson Knox said to him as they were inspecting a house in process of construction, "Don't you think the chimney in this completed house might be removed without being taken down and put in the new house?" "Yes, yes, of course," said Gleason, then catching himself he continued, "it could be done but it would injure the buildings." Knox was greatly pleased with his psychological experiment and felt his lesson, for the moment at least had taken effect.

In order to develop the resources of his vast estate and attract settlers to the community Knox early began the manufacture of lumber, opening up navigation of the Georges River as far as Union to expedite the flow of logs to his mill at Warren. He renewed the quarrying of lime on Limestone Hill and increased the number of kilns to burn it. He made use of the fine clay of the region to carry on an extensive brick-making industry. He built vessels to convey the products of all these industries to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and foreign markets, and to bring back goods and provisions to a rapidly growing settlement of mechanics, carpenters, masons, millwrights, blacksmiths, coopers, tanners, shoemakers as well as farmers, lime-burners, brick-makers and emigrants in general who had come at his bidding to help him develop his many enterprises. These industries established or stepped up by Knox were the foundation of much of the subsequent prosperity of the region.

As Knox was a man in his prime at the time of his coming to Thomaston there was every reason to believe his ventures would grow and his business prosper for many years to come. This was not to be, however, for after a brief span of eleven years he suddenly passed away in Oct. 1806, when only fifty-six. His illness, of short duration, was due to inflammation caused by lodgment of a chicken bone in his throat. His untimely end caused



great sorrow wherever his name and fame were known and was a crushing blow to Thomaston.

While Knox's enterprises were many and varied they were founded mostly on credit; because of their great diversity they were necessarily in the hands of agents. The agents were all capable and honorable men, but they were not able to carry on for long the many ventures which even before Knox's death had begun to be serious problems. The shadow of the impending War of 1812 hastened the decline of his estate, and with it the temporary decline of the town.

In 1837 about thirty years after Knox's death, Nathaniel Hawthorne came to Thomaston to visit his Bowdoin classmate and intimate friend, Jonathan Cilley. In his notebook Hawthorne jotted down: "Walked to see Knox's old mansion, a large rusty looking edifice of wood with some grandeur in the architecture . . . The house and its vicinity and the whole tract covered by Knox's patent, may be taken as an illustration of what must be the result of American schemes of aristocracy. It is not forty years since the house was built and Knox was in all his glory; but now the house is all in decay, while within a stone's throw of it is a street (Knox St.) of smart white edifices of one and two stories which has been laid out where Knox meant to have forests and parks."

That Knox's estate should decline so quickly after his death is not surprising. Mrs. Knox, a temperamental society woman, was wholly incapable of assuming the burden of responsibility, and her spoiled son Henry reformed too late to retrieve the estate or to re-establish the family prestige.

"A man's life," however, "consisteth not in the abundance of things that he *possessith*," neither does his memory depend upon the material things he leaves behind. The Revolution in which Knox had played so important a part was a revolution for democracy. Baronial estates were not in accord with that spirit. His name nor his fame never depended upon his earthly possessions. While he did not disdain the things of the flesh his realm was really the realm of the ideal—of liberty, of justice, and of freedom for all.

Lewis Frederick Starrett says in a monograph on Knox: "Be-



fore he came to us he had done enough to have established his permanent fame. He was at the head of the artillery arm of the service during the Revolutionary War, and one of Washington's most trusted counsellors in military matters. He managed the war office under the old confederacy during the interim between the close of the war and the adoption of the constitution. He was the first secretary of war under the new government in which capacity he organized the regular army, and there being no navy, and the war affairs of the nation by sea as well as land being under his charge, he was instrumental in securing the building of the ships of which 'Old Ironsides' was the most famous, which, after he was gone, sustained the prestige of the country in what has been called the Second War of Independence. He sat at Washington's council board with Jefferson and Hamilton, and was one of the closest friends of Lafayette and Greene, and, above all, of him who was first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen. The fame of the man of whom these things are written is secure beyond all possibility of change, or chance, or criticism."

Starrett might also have said that in his capacity as Secretary of War it was Knox who urged the founding of the military academy at West Point, and that some years later he was appointed its commander. Knox was also responsible for the establishment of the first arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. To him likewise must go the honor of being largely responsible for the founding of the "Order of Cincinnati," an order made up of officers of the Revolutionary Army. The object of the Order was "to cherish and perpetuate the feelings of patriotism, friendship, and fraternity which had been produced by the toils and dangers they had experienced in common, and to relieve the wants of the families of such as had fallen in the war." Washington was the first President of the order and Knox its first Secretary-General.

Mrs. Knox outlived her distinguished husband by eighteen years. In every sense of the word her declining years were the sunset of her life. She lived to see her income almost vanish, her mansion go to wrack and ruin, and the pride and joy of her heart, her spoiled son, Henry, waste his life in dissipation.

Unable to travel she staid in Thomaston. Unable to maintain

her stables in the style to which she had been accustomed she staid at home. So long did her coach remain in the carriage house that it became "powder posted by time" and she is said never to have left the mansion until carried out for burial.

Her favorite diversion was, however, still a resource; and Messrs. Snow, Paine, Pope, and Ruggles usually made it a point to drop in for a quiet game of whist which always closed with a snug little supper at eleven o'clock.

Finally, health failing, hounded by her creditors and neglected by her erstwhile friends, "On June 20th, 1824 about three o'clock in the morning . . . she departed this life at the age of sixty-eight."

Of Knox's twelve children only three lived to reach maturity. The oldest, Lucy Flucker Knox, married the Honorable Ebenezer Thatcher; the second, Henry, who was an infant at Mt. Vernon during the siege of Yorktown, married Eliza T. Read of Thomas-ton; and the youngest, Caroline Flucker Knox, was twice married, first to James Swan of Boston and second to Hon. John Holmes of Alfred. All the other children died in childhood or infancy before the death of their famous father. At the christening of the son, Henry, Gen. Lafayette, a Catholic, acted as godfather. When on his farewell visit to this country, Lafayette related the incidents of the interesting ceremony to Mrs. Thatcher. It probably had made a lasting impression upon his mind because the other godfather was Gen. Nathaniel Greene, a Quaker, while Mrs. Knox was an Episcopalian and her husband, the General, a Presbyterian!

Henry, who had been given his father's most precious possession, his name, was a wastrel. His father once said the son had cost him his weight in gold. So pampered and spoiled had he been by his mother's, and, later by his own self indulgence, that when he reached the years that should be years of discretion he was wholly incapable of assuming any of the obligations or prerogatives of his distinguished family.

When asked if he would care to go to Portland to greet his distinguished godfather, he said, "I have no wish to see him." Several years before his death, however, he did make an eleventh-



hour show of repentance, but it was too late to alter the course of his life. As a proof of his humiliation he asked that at his death his body be not placed in the family vault, but rather in a separate and an unmarked grave. As the son had no children, Knox's name was not passed on to any of his descendants.

The youngest daughter, Caroline, too, was childless. Only Lucy, the eldest of the family, had any children. She became the mother of eight. Her oldest son, Henry Knox Thatcher, was graduated from West Point, the institution sponsored by his famous grandfather, became a Commodore in the Navy serving under Farragut and participated in both attacks on Fort Fisher. While steaming up Mobile Bay in line of battle to attack the rebel fleet, Thatcher's ship, the *Colorado*, came to a sudden stop. The *Colorado* was directly in front of the *Hartford*, in the rigging of which stood Farragut. Noticing the halt, Farragut shouted, "What's the matter, Thatcher?" Thatcher answered from his quarter deck, "Torpedoes directly in front, sir." Farragut shouted back, "Go ahead and damn the torpedoes!" To which Thatcher answered, "Aye, aye, sir!"; then turning to his executive officer commanded, "Captain, damn the torpedoes and go ahead!" The *Colorado* pushed forward with speed, escaped the torpedoes and was soon hotly engaged with the enemy. For his cool gallantry, Thatcher was appointed a Rear Admiral.

Another of Lucy's sons, James, became a lawyer, entered the Navy and perished on the *Grampus* in 1843.

When the author appeared upon the scene Thomaston was within one year of its centennial, Gen. Knox had been dead nearly seventy years, his mansion had been razed and the contents scattered; the avenue leading to his estate had become a public highway, Knox Street; and although his name and influence were everywhere felt, everything pertaining to him and his family had become nothing but a proud boast and a memory.

In recent years loyal and patriotic daughters of the town, with the munificent aid of the great philanthropist, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, "The Man from Maine," have caused to be erected a replica of the mansion. Although not on the original site the new *Montpelier* commands practically the same view of the river as the



first. It is an authentic reproduction, is furnished with much of the original furniture, and is in every way a most fitting monument to perpetuate the memory of the brave General and the proud lady who called the original mansion, Home.

## *A "Seaman's War"*

WHEN LORD CORNWALLIS handed over his sword to Gen. Knox at Yorktown the Revolutionary War was virtually over. To be sure the British held New York, Charleston, and Savannah some months, but except for minor incidents the conflict was at an end.

The change from war to peace is a difficult transition. The reaction which follows the unclenching of the doubled fist usually ends in demoralization. Hatreds and injustices leave deep scars. It is years before a "war psychology" can be outgrown, if indeed it ever is.

Thomaston in common with every other hamlet and village in the newly created states felt the let down that followed the long-drawn-out struggle. It was hard for the warring factions to make peace and once again work together for the common good. With many men killed and wounded, vessels lost, property destroyed, credit gone, and in many cases confidence in friends and even relatives lost, the insecurity of peace loomed almost as darkly as the uncertainty and insecurity of war. Economically everything was at sixes and sevens. Many were impoverished because far sighted, if unscrupulous, persons took this opportunity to pay their debts in paper currency which was practically worthless.

On the other hand there was the glorious victory over the English to vindicate the belief that right makes might. Then, that the victors might not rest too heavily on their laurels, there was the new government, demanding new duties and calling for new loyalties—a challenge to put their belief in their hard-won liberties to work. When Macauley said that as our constitution was all sail and no anchor the country would soon go to smash, he disregarded the character of the people. Benjamin Burton was not

the only one to return to his plow with a new light in his eye and a new hope in his heart. There were thousands of others who by their faith in themselves and what they had accomplished, and by their patient and persistent industry helped the young republic get on its feet.

If one can judge by the records, or lack of them, Thomaston took no part in the gubernatorial elections for several years after the close of the Revolution. She did, however, send a delegate to the convention called in Boston to ratify the "new federal Constitution reported to Congress." After due deliberation the Constitution was ratified "and was now regarded as of *equal* authority with that of the State." Note the word "equal" which savors strongly of the doctrine of "State's Rights." And, shades of our ancestors, an oath of allegiance to the Constitution as well as a "test oath of the State constitution, was required here, even of the selectmen." A town could take nothing for granted in a situation so new.

Thomaston had a voice in the re-election of George Washington, casting eleven votes for each of the three electors from the electoral district which included the whole of Maine. The slate was not so definitely made up then as now. The electors voted for "George Washington and John Adams for President of the union." Washington received the majority of the total vote and became President for a second term and Adams Vice-president.

From 1785 and during Washington's first term Maj. Gen. Knox had served as Secretary of War. He was reappointed when Washington was re-elected, but after two years, becoming worn by his long term in office he resigned the post he had filled with much credit to himself and much honor to his country. The government's loss was Thomaston's gain, for, as soon as his business could be put in order he came to his wife's vast estate on the Georges, there to establish a home as imposing as Washington's Mt. Vernon on the Potomac. Coming to the Georges he literally beat his sword into a ploughshare and his spear into a pruning hook. Under his direction and patronage the land was cultivated, the lime industry expanded, lumbering developed, ship-building and commerce revived, and the art of living was raised to a high plane. The revival of old industries and the develop-



ment of new, brought many settlers to the region. They not only augmented the number of residents, they also made very valuable contributions to the web of life which had suddenly assumed so sophisticated a pattern. Almost overnight Thomaston changed from a pioneer back-woods settlement to an industrial town and a cosmopolitan sea port.

This new prosperity was not a condition peculiar to Thomaston alone, but was shared by all the coastal towns. France and England were at war and America was reaping a great profit from their necessities. The boom lasted until about 1807 when a toboggan slide set in which catapulted us into the War of 1812. Just before the boom reached its crest Knox died. The setback which followed his accidental death, after a brief but promising decade on his baronial estate, was almost a premonition of what was to happen to the nation as a whole.

Thomaston, like the rest of Maine, has always been noted for its independence of thought. This characteristic was as marked in Knox's day as during the days of the Civil War when the town sided almost solidly with the South. Knox, of course, was a Federalist and was given a unanimous vote as senator by his townspeople, yet, in national politics the town was almost overwhelmingly Jeffersonian Republican. This latter stand was probably due to sympathy for the French who had so enthusiastically espoused our cause and who were now in their turn at war with the English. Feeling ran high. The Republicans because of their French sympathies being branded "Jacobins" and the Federalists (late Whigs) were now accused of being "tories," "British tories" and "d— tories!"

The espousal of the French cause by the party in power did not save our shipping when it came to search and seizure on the high seas. Each nation had laid an embargo on all shipping with the other, so that every vessel that ventured abroad was literally "between the devil and the deep sea"—as much afraid of the French as of the British who claimed to rule the waves. So thorough was the scouring of the seas that not even the lowly wood-boat was overlooked. As with the more imposing craft that was a lucky boat that could escape an overhauling and the loss of everything of value on board. Men on these boats were oftentimes held long

enough to wring from them much needed information as to the dangers of the coast and coastal activities.

Since it was somewhat difficult for a man to prove he was an American and not an Englishman, the British conceived the idea and declared their right and intention to search American vessels for English seamen and got away with it. The injustices that procedure gave rise to were provocative of much belligerency. Thomaston, being a maritime town, felt the full brunt of all these tactics and suffered accordingly. She slumped into the deepest trough of the wave when Congress passed the *Embargo Act* which forbade American ships to leave American ports. So dependent was the region on its sea-going trade and so desperate were ship owners that some of them resorted to registry under the Swedish flag in order to carry on unmolested traffic across Penobscot Bay with Castine, still in possession of the British.

While the American shipmaster, shackled as he was by the embargo, was standing up face to face with the British, he was getting a stab in the back from the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean. The outlaws were not only capturing vessels and cargoes, but were making slaves of captured captains and crews or holding them for ransoms. Many a church congregation was startled to hear its minister announce from the pulpit that one or more of its members was being held captive in one of the Barbary ports. If the congregation had sufficient means sometimes the ransom was raised by popular subscription, if not, then "Uncle Sam" had to do it. Seeing a chance to get a steady tribute the pirates agreed, for a consideration, not to molest our merchantmen. In a spirit of helplessness our government signed a treaty to that effect. However, trouble soon arose over its terms and Jefferson decided to take the bull by the horns and put an end to the matter. All our history books tell how brilliantly that was done by Lieutenant Decatur of the U. S. frigate *Philadelphia*. That Maine vessels were caught in the toils of the pirates is authenticated by Johnston in his history of Bristol which says, "At a very early period a Capt. John Lermond sailed as master of a ship to the Mediterranean and was captured by an Algerine pirate, who put only a small prize crew on board and allowed Lermond and his mate occasionally to walk on deck. These, on a pleasant day, by previ-



ous concert, seized, each at the same instant a man of the prize crew, and by desperate effort threw him overboard; they then easily overpowered the others and brought the ship home." Cap'n John belonged to the same clan as Alexander Lermond, one of the first settlers on the Georges.

Shortly before the devastating embargo was laid down Knox had died. For a time the town was stunned and business came to a standstill. Others, however, soon put their hands to the wheel and events began to move on a fairly even keel once more. John Paine had come to the region, and not finding a suitable location for his business made one of his own up the river at the *Narrows*. There he built a wharf, a store, and a mansion, and carried on an extensive and profitable foreign lumber trade in spite of the embargo. Authorities of that day do not say how it was done and the expression "cash and carry" had not then been coined, but during that trying time English vessels did come to Paine's wharf at the Narrows to load pine lumber for Liverpool, Bristol, and other foreign ports.

One of the captains in Paine's employ at this time was Stephen Clough who conceived the romantic but impractical idea of rescuing Marie Antoinette from the throes of the French Revolution and establishing her in his beautifully furnished home on the banks of Sheepscot River in the vicinity of Wiscasset. The poor queen was guillotined before Clough could effect her rescue, but a few emigrés did find haven aboard his vessel and a new home in this country because of his sympathy and daring.

The embargo did do one thing for the region. By rendering the sea-faring and fishing industries unprofitable and almost impossible it turned the attention of the inhabitants to the land which they cleared and cultivated more extensively than hitherto. Not satisfied with the riches to be found on the surface they began to delve into the depths of the earth where they confidently expected to find everything from coal to gold. Old Mother Nature had not stored either of these minerals in this particular part of her bosom, but she had laid away streak after streak of limestone that when developed in later years brought much industry and great prosperity to the whole of Knox County. Improved roads were another indirect result of the embargo. So long



as the inhabitants clung to the shore and did all their travelling and transported all their goods by water, little attention was paid to land routes. But when the water routes were closed and even a rowboat was in danger of capture it became imperative to widen and improve the bridle paths and cart roads through the wilderness. Traffic, both legitimate and illegitimate, made great demands on the farmers for beasts of burden and for carts for local use as well as to convey goods to the west, to Portland and to Boston. The quickest time an ox team could make from Thomaston to Boston was one month, for the round trip. Employment increased as other hands were needed on the farms to replace those who had become teamsters. Prices of livestock and food-stuffs rose and in a measure compensated for the hardships inflicted by the stifling embargo.

When the "Seaman's War," as the federalists called the War of 1812, was declared, Thomaston, already hard hit, shortened sail and prepared to starve if need be to maintain the doctrine of "free-trade and sailor's rights." At that time Maine was almost exclusively maritime. It is said more soldiers and sailors were enlisted from this province than from any other state in the Union. Thomaston's first act was a very modern one: it cut its school tax in half! "Schools or guns?" "Guns," of course. Who would want to teach school, or what boy or girl would want to sit on a hard school bench when the 20-gun *Rattler* was rattling; the *Fly*, flying; the *Dart*, darting; the *Wasp* (American), stinging; the *Bream*, the *Liverpool Packet*, the 74-gun battleship *Bulwark* and the privateer *Thinks-I-to-Myself* with five guns, one on a pivot, were striking terror to the whole region and leaving death and destruction in their wake along the entire Maine coast?

So great was the fear of attack from British warships that the government was petitioned to send a *gun-boat* for the protection of Owl's Head. Eaton says, "At this time, it should be recollected, the idea of meeting the enemy at sea had not entered the mind of the administration and party in power; whose favorite policy was to sell off or dismantle the ships of war so long the pride of our patriot Knox, to save them from falling a prey to the superior power of the British navy, and to rely on gun-boats and floating batteries alone for the defense of our harbors and seaports."

That some sort of protection was necessary at Owl's Head was borne out by an incident that occurred soon after hostilities began. The *Fly* lying in wait just below the rocky promontory, succeeded in taking several prizes by stratagem. Flying the American colors, she lured a number of vessels into her trap. When her commander was satisfied he had taken all he could handle he started for the Fox Islands (Vinal Haven) signaling his captives to follow. Apparently trying to comply, several captains deliberately ran their vessels ashore. About dusk the *Fly* and the vessels in her wake dropped anchor in a seemingly uninhabited harbor. It was the commander's plan to transfer everything of value from the several ships to the *Oliver*, a Thomaston vessel, the most valuable prize. He reckoned without his host, however, for under the cover of darkness, fishermen armed with "musket, fusee, and fowling piece" sprang up almost as miraculously as the armed soldiers of the old myth emerged from the buried dragon's teeth. Striking at the break of dawn, they took the enemy completely by surprise, killing the commander, and forcing the crew to run to cover.

Notwithstanding their great disadvantage one of the enemy managed to cut the *Fly's* cable and when a favoring breeze sprang up they "cut and run," steering the vessel by means of a bayonet and musket thrust through the skylight. Five prisoners, four of them from Thomaston, were captives on board the *Fly*. They were given their liberty when a small boat hove in sight. One by one they were landed on Matinicus Rock. Capt. Barnabas Webb, one of the captives, managed to get into the cabin before leaving by asking permission to look upon the dead captain's face. There, completely covering the four walls of the cabin were pistols, sabres, pikes, boarding axes, and all the minor implements of marine warfare almost within grasp of the captain's hand had it not been rigid in death.

As time went on and certain skippers were captured again and again the British policy changed. Instead of setting their captives on shore they held them prisoner on board of warships for months on end. Others were jailed in Halifax or St. Johns and later sent to Dartmoor prison in England—7,000 men in all—where they were held subject to untold deprivation and hard-



ship. For many, Dartmoor was a purgatorial interlude where they, with long lost brothers and shipmates, were held in detention until exchange or release at the close of the war.

During the war Capt. W. O. Fuller of Oyster River, with David Lermond and A. Wylie as hands ran a little coasting schooner, the *Peggy*, from Thomaston to Boston. In October, 1813, with one passenger aboard he sailed down the river for Boston. While the schooner was windbound in a small harbor the passenger had a bad dream which led him to go ashore and finish his journey by land. The passenger's foreboding was justified, for when off Portsmouth Capt. Fuller was overhauled and taken as a prize by two French gun-brigs. Along came a British-man-of-war, which in turn captured the French frigates and their prize and took them all to Halifax. After a few days' imprisonment Capt. Fuller died of typhus fever. While Wylie was given employment in the commander's house Lermond was kept in confinement until the following August when he and four hundred other American and French prisoners were transferred to the notorious Dartmoor prison. While there Lermond was an eye-witness to the massacre of American prisoners playing ball in the prison yard. The ball rolling under the fence, one of the prisoners lay down and reached to retrieve it. The guards, assuming the man was trying to escape, fired a volley into the group, killing about sixty indiscriminately. A young Thomaston boy by the name of Holmes who spent one and one-half years in the prison, escaped death by diving among the legs of the men who were huddled together. A Camden boy's life was spared by leaping into an open window in the cook house.

Thomaston and Camden were much disturbed when Castine was taken by the British. Thomaston barely escaped a similar fate. Her only fortification was a small fort half way down the river in the town of St. George. As was sarcastically said of Pemaquid in the days of the French and Indian Wars, "Two old squaws could take it." Although it boasted two or three eighteen pound iron guns there were no soldiers to man them, there was not enough powder in the magazine to blow it up and no flag to proclaim its nationality. When soldiers from the British man-of-war, *Bulwark* came up the river in barges prepared to as-



sault it, they found it in the possession of one lone old man, who was acting as caretaker. He was only one, but he *was* one and bravely met the challenge by ordering the invaders off the premises. He refused to surrender the fort and the flag, saying, "I told you once this was Squire Prince's fort, and if you want any flag you must go to Squire Prince."

This encounter not being worth their prowess the enemy then turned their attention to several schooners lying at anchor in the river and on the stocks on the shore. A sailor was captured and ordered to pilot his captors up river to Thomaston. The lad saved the town by misrepresenting the distance and the time required to reach it. In the darkness and the fog the enemy could not see how near they were to their prize and just before day-break they turned back and rowed down the river to join their ship.

Ferocity and cruelty are not the only demons unleashed by war. Greed, a less open and more subtle monster, also rears its head at such times. Privateering and piratical instincts began to stir in erstwhile law abiding individuals. Rumors of rich prizes and the metamorphosis was achieved. One wouldn't become a pirate? No! But one could become a privateer and retain his respectability! Merchant vessels had to be armed to ward off pirates and privateers and if the captain of a merchantman could turn the trick it was a great temptation to do so. Many succumbed to the temptation. Fortunes were made, and lost, in a day. It goes without saying that some prizes—rich ones, too—were lawful. Beyond the question of a doubt others, were absolutely unlawful, often the outcome of downright collusion. History frankly tells us that privateering was common out of Portsmouth, Salem, and Marblehead. Thomaston? When it was too late to bring her much wealth, yes.

The *Fame*, built in the region of Chesapeake Bay in 1802, famed for her record run of ninety-two days from Sumatra to Vineyard Sound, had been captured and used by the British as a privateer but was retaken by subterfuge, then sold to a group of Thomaston men among whom were Dr. Dodge and John Paine. The story of the capture runs thus: She was on her way from some British possession possibly to Castine with a cargo of

“long and short sweetening” (sugar and molasses). Her commander was an Englishman. Her lieutenant, named Lowe, supposedly English, because he had shipped in Nova Scotia, was an American. As the vessel neared port the lieutenant told the crew that in the port for which they were destined sailors were being ruthlessly impressed into the British navy and if they wanted to avoid that calamity they had better conceal themselves below. After fastening them down, he sought out the commander and demanded the vessel as a prize. Since the odds were entirely against him the captain yielded.

Fortunately for the captor, two Thomaston fishermen were soon hailed. Boarding the vessel they helped him bring her into the river at the *Gig*. After the vessel and cargo had been legally condemned she was purchased by the aforesaid Thomaston citizens and fitted out as an American privateer. She carried two guns and the usual equipment of small arms and ammunition.

The *Fame's* new captain was not a Thomaston man, but her gunners were Patrick Simonton of what is now Rockland and William Singer of Thomaston and the redoubtable Simon M. Shibles was cook. On her maiden voyage as a Thomaston privateer she set sail on Thanksgiving Day—is there nothing new under the sun?—not on the last Thursday in November, but on December first. Her sphere of action was to be in the path of vessels running from Halifax to Castine. She took several small free-booters who like herself were on the rampage and finally during a heavy snowstorm succeeded in cutting one big prize out of a convoy and bringing it into Lermond's Cove, now Rockland. This all happened just in the nick of time, for at six o'clock in the afternoon of Feb. 14, 1815 “came to this place the news of Jackson's victory at New Orleans, and, two hours later, that of the cessation of the war by a treaty of peace concluded at Ghent.”

Privateering was again beyond the pale. The *Fame*, dismantled, with name unsmirched, resumed coasting, an honorable if not exciting calling for any craft in her declining years. Thomaston and the other Georges River towns, though not directly engaged in extensive privateering enterprises if a second



"plaguey peace" had not come, might have become more deeply involved, for it has been acknowledged that they "largely participated in the benefits directly flowing from it. Farmers found ample employment and high remuneration for all the teams they could muster, in transporting goods from the Penobscot to Portland, Boston, and other places; laborers were sought to supply their places on the farms; the price of cattle rose, money became abundant; and preparations were making to engage still more extensively in the business."

As much as the author would like to do so she cannot claim that the far-famed battle between the *Boxer* and the *Enterprise* took place in the Georges River. It is said, however, that the region round-about was within hearing distance of the gun fire of the running battle and that from the hilltops (Stahl's Hill in Warren and Dodge's Mountain in Rockland) the smoke of battle could be seen on that clear September day in 1814.

Both captains, hardly more than boys, (Captain Blythe of the *Boxer* aged twenty-nine, and Capt. Burrows, of the *Enterprise*, aged twenty-eight), were killed almost as soon as the encounter began. The *Boxer* soon thereafter struck her colors and surrendered. Everybody delighted? Surely. Yet the subsequent history of two members of the crews of the *Boxer* and the *Enterprise* furnishes an example of neutrality that is a classic. James Burnham, one of the sailors on the *Enterprise*, returned to his home in Thomaston when his days of service were over. Likewise, Charles Walker, a sailor on the *Boxer*, found his way to Thomaston. Both in turn married the same woman, Harriet M. Shibles (a sister to Capt. Simon), and both lie buried side by side in the village cemetery, a monument to Harriet's neutrality!



## *Cap'n Simon Shibles*

THE MAJORITY of good folk beyond the pale of Yankeedom apparently harbor the belief that a Yankee is "that way" because he doesn't know any better and that did he know he would most certainly strive to become just like the "slick city fellers." Not so. Those within the pale know that the Yankee knows what he is and wouldn't do anything about it if he could. Far from considering his traits something to apologize for, he regards them as an asset and diligently cultivates them. The encounter between the "furriner" and the Yankee is no one-sided affair. The "furriner" may make a brilliant attack and lay down a heavy barrage, but the calm, stoical, philosophical Yankee is firmly entrenched and can take care of himself. One can no more scratch the surface of his defenses than one can read the riddle of the Sphinx. This self knowledge and self appraisal has been a marked characteristic of the "Down-Easters" ever since the term "Yankee" came into existence. The late Calvin Coolidge was one of the best known and most outstanding examples of this type. He was fully aware of his personal characteristics and played them up to the n'th degree. Thus was the "Coolidge myth" built up. In his dry Yankee manner, he once said of the group which he so willingly personified, "If we are funny, then I guess there are lots of us to laugh at."

Thomaston had its full quota of Yankees who possessed all the outstanding characteristics of the tribe whom the world likes to call "quaint." They were keen. They were alert. They were shrewd and above all they possessed a sly, dry humor. If one of them became the laughing stock of the town, he usually saw to it that his fellow citizens had plenty to laugh at. Unlike the present day radio comedian he built up his reputation by not "slopping over." If he had a bon-mot to drop or a situation

to exploit he rolled it under his tongue or kept it under his hat until the psychological moment arrived and he had his audience with him. His technique was a technique of strategy. In addition to all the qualities inherent in the makeup of the common, everyday type of Yankee, the Thomastonian variety had a dash of the saltiness of the sailor and the *savoir-faire* of the world traveler. He was a Yankee par-excellence. He knew it and made the most of it.

Of all the Yankee sailors who called Thomaston "home" none was more flavorsome or individual than Capt. Simon Shibles. "Cap'n Simon" was truly a native son. His ancestors came to the Georges with the first settlers in 1736, settling in the lower part of the *Upper Town* near the *Narrows*. His great-grandmother, a widow, was the only woman in the settlement holding a "rat-able estate" at the time of the incorporation of the town. Much of the land of the original estate is still in possession of her descendants. By being born Feb. 13, 1792, Cap'n Simon just escaped being a valentine. Had he been a valentine he most surely would have preferred to be a robust comic; a lacy one bedecked with hearts and cupids would never have harmonized with "the cut of his jib." The Cap'n was what he was from choice. He sedulously cultivated the personality and gifts the fairies good and bad had handed out to him.

Like all Thomaston boys, while yet in his teens, he went to sea, not scorning to "go cook" if no better berth was offered. He was the presiding genius in the galley of the U. S. brig, *Enterprise*, in 1813, when that up-and-coming craft gave the *Boxer* such a trouncing. Had he not served well in that capacity possibly the gunner's hands might not have been so steady nor their marksmanship so true. Who knows? The next time we hear of Simon, he was captain. It goes without saying that he must have risen by the usual stages that led to that position. He most certainly did not step directly from the galley to the quarter deck.

His memory does not linger, nor his name hang on the lips of even present day Thomastonians, because of his prowess as a cook or because of his ability as a captain, but rather as that of a man who left his personal impress on everything he said or did. In former days everybody had stories to tell of his quaint



drollery. Although he had retired from the sea many years before his death, he sedulously cultivated the salty airs and punctuated his speech with the profanity and nautical phrases of an old sailor. He was of a very sociable nature and always ready to talk with every one he met. An elderly neighbor, a Mr. Maxcy, called on Cap'n Simon every morning for years. The visit invariably ended in a verbal quarrel. Maxcy always went home for lunch in a huff, but was back again as soon as he had eaten. In spite of these daily quarrels Cap'n Simon had great respect for his old neighbor, always saying when he needed verification, "So says the Bible, so said my father, so says old Mr. Maxcy, and I'll be damned if they lie!"

One year in haying time an elderly gentleman was riding by Cap'n Shibles' home in company with a minister. The latter knowing the Cap'n's propensities and enjoying his droll speech, drew rein and asked how the haying was going. Dropping his scythe and leaning over the fence, the old fellow said, "Well, to begin with, one old man alone in haying time is a damned small crew!"

Perhaps because one person alone in haying was such a small crew, he was the first person in Thomaston to own a mowing machine. The machine was delivered in parts with a book of instructions telling how to assemble it. With the aid of his son, *Haunce*, he managed to get the contraption together and out in the field ready for action. Haunce mounted it. His father followed, instruction book in hand, to see the thing go and to give advice as to its manipulation. When Haunce had gone through the deep grass a short distance, he noticed the cutter-bar was just pressing down the grass and shouted to his father, "She ain't cuttin', father!" His father delighted that the thing would move at all shouted back, "Keep a goin', Haunce, keep a goin'! She's all right! So says the book and so says the owner!" The owner was wrong. The blade was in "hind side to."

In President Jackson's administration Cap'n Simon found himself in southern waters with a cargo of Thomaston lime on his hands. Many other vessels, also lime-laden, had preceded him and for lack of a market were tied up at the wharves or idly lying at anchor in various ports. Cap'n Shibles was a man of action and



he had no notion of thus idling away his time nor that of his vessel and crew; so he nosed his way up the Potomac River to Washington just behind another lime-laden craft. He anchored his vessel a short distance down stream. Donning his buff trousers, his broadcloth coat and his "keg" or high hat he took advantage of the flood tide to row up to the city where he sought and gained an audience with the President. It was early in the morning when he arrived at the White House. Nobody was stirring but a colored servant who was sweeping off the porch, and he declared that nobody could see "Marse Jackson" at that hour of the day.

Shibles insisted and in the altercation that ensued, evidently lifted his voice, for Jackson heard the controversy, came to the door and invited Cap'n Simon in. Charmed and amused by his quaint speech the President listened to his proposition and agreed to take the cargo, promising to give an order for its delivery to the United States Arsenal in a day or so. Cap'n Simon objected. Red tape or no red tape he must be on the move again, had got to row back down the river, and was anxious to "ketch" the ebb tide adding, "Time and tide wait for no man," you know. Jackson did know it and took the responsibility of cutting whatever red tape stood in the way of issuing an immediate order. The transaction completed, Simon didn't let any grass grow under his feet. He bade the President a respectful adieu and made tracks for his vessel. To the consternation of the neighboring captains, he immediately began to weigh anchor. In answer to inquiries as to why he was leaving without selling his cargo, he replied that he had sold it. "Sold it! To *who*?" was the logical question. "To the President of the United States!" was the boastful answer and with a characteristic wave of the hand he added, "And that's the kind of a critter I am!" To add to Cap'n Simon's triumph President Jackson not only bought his cargo of lime, but gave him an order for a cargo of live oak to be delivered at the Charlestown Navy Yard on his way home.

A number of years later Cap'n Simon found himself in conflict with the pilotage laws of Virginia and voiced his protest in the following communication to the *Richmond Times*: "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights. To all whom it may concern. I am here at the Metropolis of the Old Dominion, summoned to an-

swer a warrant before his honor the mayor, for a charge of pilotage, by what is called a 'Branch Pilot.' I have paid a pilot for conducting me from Hampton Roads up James River. I sailed last from the port of New York under a coasting license which I humbly conceive entitles me to navigate the coast of Virginia and other States of the Union. Of this Branch Pilot I asked nothing, received nothing, and of course, (without compulsion) do not mean to pay nothing. As this is a matter that affects all interested in shipping, I invite their attention and co-operation in the steps to be taken before the mayor on the 4th inst. I close by saying that if precedent should prevail against me, I shall seek an appeal and carry the matter to such court as may be necessary to ascertain the constitutionality of the law (if there be such a law) even should I have to incur the whole expense. I am a plain old man, have been in many a storm, and if I am wrecked in this my effort for Free Trade and Sailors' Rights, I know I have still a plank left which shall float over the seas of the free, which is often the home of the brave.

(Signed) "Simon M. Shibles of Thomaston, Maine."

When his case came up in Court Cap'n Simon argued in his own defense, saying, "Jedge, s'posin' you was walking through a deep, dark ravine with steep rocky walls on both sides of you and you saw a great God-damned *bear* ahead of you, what would you do?" The Judge reprimanded him by saying, "Captain Shibles, such language as yours will not be permitted in this court-room. If you do not desist the court will have to fine you for contempt." "But," repeated Cap'n Simon, "s'posin' you saw a great God *damned* bear coming toward you, what would you do?" "Captain Shibles, again, I repeat, I cannot allow such language in this court-room." More and more excited, Simon persisted, "But, Jedge, s'pose he was a great *God* damned bear, what would you do?" Finally sensing that Capt. Simon was not used to court procedure and meant no offense by his profanity, the "jedge" allowed him to go on. Given a fair hearing he proceeded with such fearlessness and honesty that he won the favor of the court and a favorable verdict was handed down. The verdict stated that "the law of Virginia being in conflict with the



jurisdiction of the United States, could not prevail." Soon after the law requiring branch pilotage was repealed.

With Cap'n Simon, profanity, shocking as it was, was simply a series of adjectives—a sort of hyperbole. As in the Virginia court he used it on any and all occasions and in any and all company. On one of his trips South he was invited to dine at the home of a cotton planter at whose plantation his vessel was being loaded. When the family assembled at the dinner table the host, made an attempt to ward off an embarrassing situation by saying, "We usually ask a grace before meat." "It is a damned good plan," the guest heartily agreed, and devoutly bowed his head.

Capt. Simon, in Boston once upon a time, thought he would like to take a present home to his wife. After giving considerable thought to the matter he finally decided to buy her a Bible. When he stepped up to the counter of a book store and asked to be shown Bibles, the clerk misjudging him by his rough dress and uncouth manners, began to show him small, inexpensive editions. Simon kept shaking his head saying, "Them won't do! Them won't do!" Looking about to see if he himself could see anything to his liking he espied some larger, more ornate ones on a high shelf. Pointing to them he said to the clerk, "Hand me down some of them God-damned big ones up there." He knew what he wanted. He bought one of the big ones.

For years Captain Shibles, the prudent Yankee that he was, had refused to purchase a chronometer for his ship thinking it needless expense and that he could do without it perfectly well. Finally, his first mate bought one with his own money and installed it on the ship. Cap'n Simon, though inwardly pleased, stubbornly refused to make any outward sign of interest in the gadget. To the great delight of the mate shortly after leaving port with the new instrument aboard, they were spoken by a ship whose captain asked for the time of day. Promptly Captain Shibles shouted, "Two-thirty o'clock by the best chronometer that money can buy."

Although habitually profane he could and did pray when driven to it by overwhelming circumstances. On one of his many voyages, Cap'n Simon was caught in a terrible storm. The vessel



got off her course. The Cap'n lost all his bearings. In his perplexity, thinking of his wife's anxiety, he said, "I wish Sally knew where we was." To which one of the crew, a neighbor, retorted, "I wish *you* knew where we was." To add to his responsibility there were several passengers aboard. Sometimes there is safety in numbers, but not at sea when a wild storm is raging. Then additional numbers are simply hysterical onlookers. As sea after sea washed over the decks and sail after sail was carried away Cap'n Simon finally acknowledged that all seamanship had failed and they could rely only on God's mercy. Somebody suggested prayer. Surely the time to pray had come. But who was to do it? Whose duty was it—certainly not the passengers'. They had paid good money for their passage with the expectation of safe conduct and safe arrival. Besides none of them were "professing Christians." None had put their trust in the Lord before embarking. Surely they could not be expected to pray. Neither was the Cap'n a praying man. Nor had he put his trust in the Lord. He had relied wholly on his own seamanship and here they all were in a terrible predicament. But wasn't he the captain? Wasn't it his bounden duty to safeguard his passengers? If he couldn't do it by his seamanship, then wasn't it up to him to call on the Almighty for deliverance? It surely was. Convinced of his duty, Cap'n Simon was never known to shirk. He dropped to his knees and prayed: "Good Lord, we are on a stormy sea, buffeted by a heavy gale. We have lost our bearings. We may be on a lee shore, at least we think we are. We haven't the reckoning. If you will only bring us safe to shore this time I promise never to ask you for another God-damned thing. Amen."

The prayer evidently reached the "Throne of Grace." They were saved.

## *Buried Treasure*

IN THE REGION of the Georges, as along the entire Atlantic seaboard, Capt. Kidd or other pirates were reported to have buried treasure of gold and silver and precious stones. On the Cushing side of the river the earliest settlers had found an underground cave with a subterranean passageway to the water's edge. As it was wholly unlike anything the Indians were known to construct it was presumed to be the work of pirates and soon became known far and wide as the *Pirate's Cellar*. The assumption was that there the "Jolly Rovers" met and divided their spoil. As no pirate worthy of his calling would bury all his loot in one place or where any other pirate could easily get it, it was reasonable to assume that treasure was buried in secluded spots all along the shore.

Many a pioneer, who grunted and groaned over the back-breaking work required to remove stumps in order to clear the land for crops, would, with great enthusiasm and persistence, dig and delve for hours in rocky coves where only the wildest fancy could expect treasure to be hidden. Every clue was carefully followed up, charts were drawn, *metal divining rods* were used, and charms and ridiculous incantations were observed with meticulous care. The first person to start digging in the vicinity was a man by the name of Jackson, a whip-sawyer by trade, who had a perfect mania for such adventure. His clues pointed to Brown's Point as the hiding place of the vast wealth. His expeditions were planned with secrecy, and under the cover of darkness, carried out with extreme caution. Because of his failure to comply with one stipulation or another he never secured any of the much coveted loot. Once, as the treasure was almost within his grasp, he made an exclamation that broke the spell and completely frustrated his carefully wrought plans.

Others, just as they had struck the edges of iron-bound caskets and chests, were forced by the tide to relinquish operations for a few hours only to find on the resumption of their efforts that in the interim the treasure had *moved* and upset all their calculations.

A point on the eastern side of the river was so closely associated with these piratical traditions that it was given and still bears the name *Treasure Point*. According to legend, a privateer came into a river once-upon-a-time in pursuit of a treasure ship which eluded her by slipping behind a point on the easterly bank. While the privateer kept on her way upstream the pirate ship tarried just long enough to bury her gold and silver, then slipped out of the river before her pursuer realized she had lost her prey. For years sailors and others cherished charts of this legendary river whose contour tallied so closely with that of the Georges that by general consent it was agreed the river in question could be none other than the Georges and the point of land marked with a cross was surely the point now known as *Treasure Point*. One enthusiast after another dug and dug. To this day the place is pitted with excavations—all the diggers had to show for their credulity.

A local sea captain who came across a treasure chart a sailor was studying in the fo'c's'le of his ship, was so thoroughly convinced that it was a chart of the Georges River that on his return home he secured metal rods, tried them out on two hundred dollars in gold, and hastened to the spot supposedly marked on the map. The rods, which had tipped definitely, but only slightly, in the direction of the two hundred dollars bent almost to the ground when carried to the shore. Notwithstanding that fact, a trench fifteen or twenty feet long failed to reveal the hidden treasure which may still be waiting for a second Sir William Phipps. Who knows? Of such stuff dreams are made.

"Foolishness!" do I hear some one say? Perhaps, but, as a lady naively said, "Nobody knew there was a subway under New York until they dug for it!" Had all the wealth sought by all the dreamers been discovered it would have been of trifling worth compared with the riches Mother Nature had been storing up here during the ages for man's use.





Top: Schooner *Hattie Dunn*, torpedoed by German submarine during World War I. Note the submarine in the foreground. Bottom: Schooner *Edna Hoyt*, one of the last five-masters to fly the American flag, entering harbor of San Juan, Puerto Ricò.





Ship *Joseph Fish* and the barque *Minnie Watts* at wharf in New Orleans. Note the figureheads.

About three hundred million years ago the whole Georges region was under the sea. Streams brought down quantities of mud and spread it over the ocean floor. Later this mud hardened to form rock known as Islesboro slate which today is found in several parts of the area. Then the water became deeper and free from mud. In this pure sea water lived animals which secreted lime to form their shells or framework. To these animals practically all Knox county is indebted for the limestone industry to which the region owes not a little of its prosperity. The accumulations must have continued over long periods of time to produce the great deposits of limestone found in the quarries. Pressure and folding brought the layers of slate and limestone above the level of the sea to form land.

As we read of earthquakes in California and volcanic eruptions in Italy or the West Indies we sit back in our chairs with a sigh of relief because nothing like that ever happens in New England. But New England was once young and full of life and spirit. Even in what is now Penobscot Bay, volcanoes were emitting lava and ashes over the surrounding land and water. Nor was this youthful spirit limited to the coast of Maine. Staid Boston was also cutting up. There volcanoes were shooting great globes of molten rock high into the sky and fine dust into the waters about Nantasket.

Meanwhile in the Georges Valley region masses of lava were being pushed up beneath and between the old stratas of slate and limestone. These cooled far below the surface and appeared as granite hills and islands only when the thick layers above had been worn away by weathering and erosion.

Thus, as in the case of the limestone, youth was making provision for old age; for the granite of the islands of Penobscot Bay and the lower Georges have given profitable industries, opportunities for labor, and cargoes for ships.

The rocks of the region were so strongly compressed by uplift and folding that all forms of life were obliterated. There are no fossils to enable the geologist to determine the age of the rocks. This can only be done by comparing them with the rocky near-by areas in which fossils do occur.

After uplift brought the rocks above the level of the sea, weath-



ering and erosion reduced the surface practically to what it is today. Later partial subsidence allowed the sea to enter the river valley thus producing Penobscot Bay—really the drowned lower valley of the Penobscot River—the wide tidal Georges, and other numerous and deep bays and “gallent” coves all along the coast.

These events in the geological life of the Georges region occurred perhaps 200,000,000 years ago. From that time till the beginning of the ice age, perhaps 500,000 years ago, little of interest seems to have happened. Geologically there was not much to gossip about for nearly 200,000,000 years. Then the country was certainly given a chill. A sheet of ice a mile or more in thickness swept over all of Canada and the northern United States. This sheet of ice, moving in general from north to south, swept everything movable before it. Much of the better soil of southern New England was carried out to sea and dumped in deep water where it could not possibly be of use to anyone. In exchange the region was left a thin, stony soil especially on the higher lands which yield only moderate returns for the hardest kind of labor. A discouraged farmer recently remarked that it would be hard to find a spoonful of good soil on an upland farm.

All animal and plant life was either destroyed or forced southward in front of the advancing ice. When the ice finally withdrew some thirty thousand years ago the plants and animals slowly followed the ice northward and occupied their former localities.

At the time of the glacial period the land of the Georges region stood from two hundred to two hundred fifty feet lower than it does now. This allowed the sea to enter the valleys for several miles. Streams from the ice sheet covered these valleys in every place with fine heavy clay, sometimes to a depth of fifty or seventy-five feet. When the beds of clay were below tide water, they were really extensive clam flats like those of today.

The shoreline then was of course two hundred feet higher than it is now. On the western side of Bear Hill in Rockport one can readily discern an old beach with caves cut by the waves when the water stood at the higher level. On the terrace cut by the waves, farmers for decades have drawn their firewood around the mountain side where the land was level.

Some of the clays deposited at this time were mixed with gla-

cial sands, making excellent soil. The prosperous farms of the Meadows and of South Warren testify to the truth of this statement. Thus we see how through the ages, Mother Nature prepared a shoreline with deep bays and wide river mouths suitable for building and launching ships. Along the same shores, fish of many kinds abound. The fish proved of great value to early settlers who found it difficult indeed to gain a livelihood in an unbroken wilderness. In later years fishing became a profitable industry and a stimulus to shipbuilding. In the back country even though the soil was poor, great forests covered hill and dale. These constituted much of the wealth of the pioneers.

The shoreline and the forests, together with deposits of limestone and granite constituted the treasures which the people of the Georges region transformed into gold far more valuable than the storied wealth of Captain Kidd. It is also probable that the wealth gained by labor brought much more happiness and contentment than could possibly have come from riches dug from a pirate's hoard.



## *A Backbone of Lime*

ONE OF THE STRIKING features of the landscape in the Georges River region is the way Old Mother Nature shows her ribs. There are outcroppings of rock everywhere. The earliest explorers were quick to note that and rejoiced to learn that many of the ledges were of limestone, a rock that could be turned to useful account. For many years this stone was the basis of one of the leading industries of Thomaston and Rockland. Lime was also burned on a smaller scale in Rockport and Warren.

The first experiments in the burning of limestone were made by Samuel Waldo some years prior to 1750. Under his management lime was burned in considerable quantities and shipped to the Boston market. When his property came into the possession of Gen. Knox, the latter continued the industry as one of the means of developing the resources of his extensive holdings.

Not only Waldo and Knox, but every landholder who had an outcropping of the stone on his premises dabbled in the production of lime. All over Knox County to this day may be seen the ruins of their primitive kilns. The kilns, which resembled old-fashioned bee hives, were built of field stone and located on the side of a knoll or on the face of a small cliff so the limestone could be hauled to the top of the kiln, thereby saving the cost of building a bridge. After the farmer had blasted out his rock, and cut his wood, preferably spruce, for firing the kiln, he piled rock and wood in alternate layers in the crude oven and started the fire which was allowed to burn for a week or ten days. It took two tenders, one night man, and one day man to keep the fires going until the lime was burned. The kiln was then torn down and the lime allowed to cool, after which it was barreled for transportation. The first barrels used were empty molasses hogsheads from the West Indies. The staves of those "hogsets" as they

were locally called, had possibly been cut and fashioned by the farmer himself or his neighbors, for the manufacture of barrel staves for the "W. I. trade" was one of the earliest local industries. As the demand for lime increased, instead of depending on empty hogsheads for containers the farmer, who had all his materials right at hand, set up his own casks. Thus the ingenious Yankee found a way to solve a problem from start to finish, to add to his personal income, and to help develop the natural resources of the region.

Limestone is composed chiefly of calcium and carbon-dioxide gas. While in common parlance it is "burned," technically speaking, nothing of the sort happens. It is the fuel that burns, heating the limestone red-hot. When the lime becomes thus heated it gives off the carbon-dioxide gas it contains leaving a white substance known as "quick"-lime. The latter, when mixed with water for which it has a great affinity, becomes the *slaked* lime of the building trades and is used in the making of mortar and plaster. In slaking, the lime increases its bulk considerably and gives off great heat. Those two factors made it a hazardous storage product or cargo for a vessel. Kiln sheds frequently caught fire, seldom from the heat of the kilns, more often from inundation during a high course of tides.

Massachusetts had been settled over a hundred years when the settlement on the Georges was established. In the older settlements crude log cabins were giving way to frame houses, which needed an interior plaster finish to make them snug and comfortable. Fortunately for the dwellers on the Georges they possessed about the only supply of lime on the Atlantic seaboard, and until the railroads opened up the supplies in the middle-west, the only available supply in the country. Because of the great demand it soon became an important item in the cargo of every vessel that was loaded at Thomaston. Later, when it became the chief outgoing freight of the coasters, it was frequently carried as ballast for the prouder vessels as they sailed on their maiden voyages to southern ports to load cotton for Liverpool. The fact that it had a sales value in the various ports made an appeal to the thrifty ship owners who had to start their vessels light.

By 1795 there were no less than thirty-five kilns, in Thomaston



which were burned from three to five times a year, consuming at each burning about twenty-five cords of wood and yielding two hundred casks of fifty gallons, which brought, at the market, a net gain each of about 6s.—the market price being between 10s. and 11s. In the following year, 1796, the Rev. Paul Coffin, D. D., of Buxton, on a preaching tour through the coastal settlements noted in his journal that he “passed through Thomaston where the famous Georgetown Lime is burnt, now called Thomaston lime” . . . “Here saw several *waggon*s which was a rare sight, as I saw few iron-bound wheels in my mission”—and “In Warren and Thomaston you see lime-kilns, cooper’s shops, and casks and wagons, which things as you come from the eastward seem new.”

In later years Henry Thoreau, the essayist and philosopher, deigned to mention Thomaston lime in his book written at Walden. As he sat in his lonely cabin retreat on the shore of Walden pond, his meditations were often aroused by the whistle of a passing locomotive. He found himself “refreshed and expanded . . . more like a citizen of the world,” as a train rattled by. In the list of articles borne on freight trains he mentions “Thomaston lime, a prime lot, which will get far among the hills before it gets slacked.” Thomaston and lime were almost synonymous, but they must have been famous indeed to be coupled in the mind of so impractical a person as Thoreau.

So numerous did the number of kilns become that what in later years became known as cut-throat competition ensued and, while they did not plow the lime under, the producers did enter into an agreement to limit its production and keep the price up. They agreed not to undersell each other nor have more than one kiln on sale at one time. For a while the scheme worked well. The price was raised to \$1.50 and \$1.75, but alas and alack a form of price cutting gradually crept in, the scheme was abandoned, and the market again became a free for all. From very early days Inspectors of Lime were appointed to regulate its production.

By 1828 one would suppose the whole underlying foundation of the town would have been honeycombed with quarries, for in that year there were 160 kilns in the town, seventeen of them being on Mill River below the bridge, five on the eastern side,

and twelve on the western side; and among others scattered in various other parts of the town there were eight at Beechwoods! In the same year a correspondent of a local newspaper wrote concerning the industry of Thomaston: "The quantity of lime manufactured in this place is incredible. The whole town smokes like one great kiln. The streets are almost macadamized with fragments dropped from lime wagons. The walls of some buildings are of limestone; the underpinning and doorsteps of houses are frequently the same. Furthermore one sees on all sides in the chimneys and over the windows marble wrought from the same quarries. Perhaps \$150,000 worth of lime has been exported annually for the past 20 years, and \$10,000 worth of marble for the past five years."

The town must have been reeking with smoke, yet nobody objected. A smoke that was making everybody healthy, wealthy, and wise was not to be quarreled with. A comparatively low death rate in the community was attributed to the salubrious effects of the carbonic-acid gas in the kiln smoke, which was supposed to be very efficacious in warding off "*diphtheria* and other *putrid* diseases" . . . "When in 1832 the cholera caused a widespread panic in the country the people were told by an aged man of Waldoboro, of German descent, (probably Conrad Heyer, the seventh son of a seventh son, who was supposed to have prophetic vision), that they need have no fear, 'the cholera *can't* come here, while the lime-kilns are kept going!' " Cyrus Eaton refers to the smoke as *terebinthine*" which sounds poetic, but which smells of turpentine. Long, long years ago the natives of Edinburgh, Scotland, lovingly dubbed their city "Auld Reekie" because of the clouds of smoke that enveloped it. What wouldn't Rockland and Thomaston give if their "auld reekie" days could come once more? How they would welcome the sharp, acrid smoke billowing out of their now abandoned kilns!

In the early days when the output of lime was comparatively small it mattered little that the kilns were located right beside the quarry and the finished product hauled from there to the river bank. Later, as the demand increased, larger kilns were built at the water's edge and the rock hauled from the quarries. Since it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, the latter method



though somewhat disadvantageous to the owners of the quarries were advantageous to the region as a whole because of the teaming business which arose as a very important adjunct to the industry. In 1828 in Thomaston alone there was employment for 204 ox-wagons and carts and 226 yoke of oxen. Who would ever have dreamed then that the chief present day function of an ox-bow would be as an ornament over a garage door! Later the slow, plodding oxen gave way to horses. While eventually Rockland built a railroad to convey the rock to the kilns, Thomaston never did anything more ambitious along that line than to employ a tractor when a spurt in the business seemed to warrant it. It came too late. Substitutes for lime rather than transportation had become the bogey of the trade.

With the kilns along the water-front the business steadily increased until in 1845 the product of the whole town (then including Rockland) amounted to about 636,000 casks valued at \$538,000. It was estimated that 2000 kegs of powder at \$2.75 a keg were used for blasting in the quarries and 43,000 cords of wood at three dollars a cord used for fuel for the kilns. The industry employed at that time 100 quarrymen, 50 teamsters and 150 kiln-tenders making a total payroll of approximately \$74,000 per year.

For many years the region possessed a great advantage over other quarries not so fortunate as to be located on the coast. Sailing vessels from Rockland, Thomaston, and Rockport carried the lime directly from the kilns along the shore to markets on or near the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. This was before the days of trans-continental railroads and any inland lime industry had an insuperable difficulty in getting so bulky and heavy a product to market. Thus Thomaston and Rockland took advantage of the opportunity offered by proximity of quarry and sea, and prospered accordingly.

A few years later, in 1850, Rockland alone marketed 800,000 casks per year. At that time it was the chief lime producing center of the United States. Nearly all the principal American ports were supplied. Lime furnished outgoing cargoes to 120 coasting vessels which were usually able to obtain a return cargo. Another fleet of 120 coasters were needed to supply the kilns with wood

for fuel which was becoming scarce locally. They brought it from the islands and coast towns farther east, and even from the Canadian provinces. So many vessels came into Rockland harbor that it was said to be the third largest port of entry in the country. St. John wood boats were a common sight on the Georges. They were squat and broad, boasting no bowsprit or overhanging stern, and having only a single deck house and an exposed rudder. These boats used to come around Brown's point piled so high with kiln-wood that their decks were often several inches awash.

By 1881 the region was producing 1,200,000 casks of lime annually and employing 1,000 men. To supply the kilns with "rock" or limestone required numerous teams of four horses or four oxen each. The heavy loads were drawn over many of the main highways which became deeply rutted and were often rendered dangerous for ordinary use. In the springtime streets became rivers of mud from six to eight inches deep, and, in places, up to the hubs of the wheels. Working on the theory that "the hair of a dog will cure the bite of a dog," lime-rock chips were used to fill the depressions and they proved to be quite as efficacious as the dog-bite remedy. The soft limestone was wholly inadequate to support the weight of the heavy loads of rock. Deep ruts soon formed and when the roads were not a slough of despond the air was filled with dust from the powdered rock. Old residents recall a feat of Old "Doc" Coombs, a South Thomaston mail carrier. One year when the roads were a sea of mud he wagered that he could navigate a punt from South Thomaston right through the heart of the city of Rockland and not once leave the highway. He won his bet in spite of the fact that his boat was drawn by a horse and met with several upsets en route.

When the lime kilns were belching their smoke, the whole region round about was humming with prosperity. The farmer had a market for his wood which was used as fuel at the kilns or for the manufacture of casks to hold the lime. The whole hinterland within a radius of twenty or thirty miles was dotted with cooper shops where the casks were made. On every sizable stream were small saw mills. All winter men and teams were busy cutting and hauling logs to the mills to be sawed into lumber for



staves and heads. Small growths of birch, ash, or maple were cut for hoop-poles. Long slivers with the bark left on were sliced from the sides of the poles for the hoops. The material thus roughly prepared was taken to the nearby cooper shops where the casks were made by hand, giving employment to many men. The average cooper made from fifteen to twenty casks a day with a yearly average of 3,000 casks.

When the casks were finished they were loaded in towering piles on hay-racks, often as many as 150 to a rack, and carried to the kilns in Thomaston or Rockland. Since the distance was considerable it was necessary for the driver to start in the small hours of the night. If the team were an ox-team the driver armed himself with a goad-stick to prod the slow moving creatures along and with a lighted lantern swinging from under the rear of the rack he stepped forth into the night with his creaking, swaying load. Unlike the modern truck-driver he had no head lights, no street lights, and very few house lights to guide him; and whether the distance were ten, twenty, or thirty miles he had to walk every step of the way. With a "haw" or a "gee" and an occasional prod from his goad he kept the creatures to the task for which they had been yoked up—that of getting the casks to the kiln in order that somebody in some far away city might have lime to plaster his house. Horsedrawn vehicles were not much more speedy than those hauled by oxen, for the horses, too, had to walk every step of the way, but it was more comfortable for the teamster as he could guide the horses by rein from a seat in the rack.

Work in the quarries was backbreaking and dangerous. The rock had to be blasted and although the men sought safety until after the blast, occasionally there were premature explosions. Many a man if not killed outright was blinded or suffered the loss of hands, arms, or legs. One quarryman spent a long life without arms because a half-witted brother put some powder into a partially drilled hole on which he was working. Even if properly timed it was not always possible to tell how far reaching the result of an explosion would be. As the quarries grew deeper and deeper many a life was snuffed out because large fragments of rock on the brink, loosened by explosion and frost, fell hurtling

into the pit. In 1846, it is recorded: "Alfred Moore, having been blown up and lost his sight on a former occasion, still continued to work in the quarry in spite of his blindness; and while so engaged was struck on the head by a fragment of rock thrown from an adjoining quarry and in two hours expired at the age of twenty-seven."

There was no accident insurance at that time and no workmen's compensation, as it was just too bad for the victim of an accident regardless of whether the fault were due to his own negligence or that of his employers. If a man's relatives could not assume financial responsibility for the victim or his family then it was up to the town. Town wards were frankly called "paupers" and annually auctioned off as boarders to the lowest bidder. This was a humiliating experience for all concerned.

That the town occasionally rose to heights of generosity is shown by the assistance given Jairus Monroe. In 1825 he lost his eyesight because of a premature explosion. After two years of individual effort to recover his sight the town voted to lend him the munificent sum of fifty dollars on his personal note. Although unable to meet his obligation he made such a determined effort to once again become self supporting that eight years later the town magnanimously voted to cancel the note! On another occasion, Benjamin F. Dean, having lost his sight in the same dangerous business, and exhausted his means in a vain attempt to gain help at the Eye Infirmary in Boston, the town in 1847, voted to aid him "to an amount not exceeding \$200, in building a house either on his wife's lot in East Thomaston or elsewhere, as most convenient, retaining a lien thereon in case of sale." The munificent sums so recklessly voted in those two cases show that the seeds of the Townsend Plan were even then germinating.

Since water has the same affinity for lime that a spark has for tinder, when a vessel was loaded with it the hatches were always sealed and every precaution was taken to keep water out of the hold. Fire alone on shipboard could sometimes be mastered, but the best caulked seams of the stoutest vessels could not withstand the pressure from within if water got in and the lime



began to swell. Seam after seam would give way under the strain, more water would pour in and the heat mounting disastrously, would ruin the cargo and destroy the vessel.

Waterlogged lumber-laden vessels have been known to drift for many months after being abandoned. Not so a lime-laden vessel. If one such sprang a leak something had to be done about it, and quickly. In March, 1885, a Rockland vessel was caught off Thatcher's Island in a gale such as one reads about in story books. She was driven off shore as far as the Grand Banks, being unmercifully pounded and washed all the while. When a brief lull came she was brought round and headed for Boston, only to meet the father of all gales. In the words of one of the crew, a Thomaston man, "Before we knew it we were back across the Gulf again; sails all gone, cargo afire, and the vessel plastered up, with a drag ahead to keep her up to the sea." Likening their dilemma to that of the harassed Jews who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem when "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other held a weapon" the narrator continued, "that's what we did, worked on the drag with one hand and a plastering trowel in the other, smothering the fire . . . and we wasn't doing it on your barn floor either. Finally that gale blew itself out. One night what looked to be a large ship passed us, as we laid to our drag, but she evidently didn't see us. With our mainmast burned off and settled, held only by the spring stay we drifted for several days. When 200 miles off to the east and south of Bermuda the vessel was sighted and the crew taken off by a "Blue-nose" barkentine bound for St. Johns, Newfoundland. At St. Johns the American consul secured passage for the crew on an emigrant steamer bound for Halifax. At first we were down in the hold with nearly twelve hundred immigrants. Later we were transferred to the first cabin." By shuttling back and forth between the provinces and the states the man eventually reached home again, where after the passage of many years, he found himself recalling his old experiences and saying, "Those were the days, I can tell you!"

It often happened, however, that a coaster got no farther down the river than Maple-Juice Cove or *Tizzacher's* Elbow before the craft caught fire. The record of one such disaster reads: "The

—— ——— parted chain cables and went ashore. The night was cold, snowy, and blowing heavily, the cargo took fire and the vessel burned, a total loss."

As time went on the old wood-burning kilns were displaced by new "*patent kilns*" which burned coal. The so called patent kiln was radically different from the old type, being much taller; and requiring a high bridge in order to get the rock to the top of the kiln. The kiln had two arches, one in front and one in back. In each arch was a pillar to keep the lime from falling out in the arch. In the drawpit where the burned lime was taken out at the bottom of the kiln, the tenders shovelled it to a large hearth where it was picked over and barreled. The patent kiln was lined with fire brick from top to bottom which made it expensive to build, but the saving in fuel made the cost of production much lower. The old type of kiln took more than double the amount of wood per cask than the new. However, wood-burned lime was of superior quality, and so far no process has been invented that could make so good a lime as that burned with wood. Charles Creighton of the late firm of J. A. Creighton & Co. vouched for the last statement. He said, "I know what I am talking about for we tried about every process except the gas process and we would go back to wood every time, sadder but wiser."

Rockland eventually eclipsed Thomaston as a producer and shipper of lime. When the great combine known as the *Rockland-Rockport Lime Co.* was incorporated, nearly all the small companies in the surrounding towns were swallowed up by it. Not so the Creightons in Thomaston; they managed to keep their quarries open and their kilns burning as long as there was a market for their goods.

As we have seen the lime industry brought prosperity to the lime manufacturer, to the shipbuilders and the ship owners, to the owners of forest land, and to the farmers and their sons. But about the turn of the century there came a gradual but decided change in the picture. In Rockland rails were laid and locomotives were used to transport the rock from quarry to kiln. One by one the old wood-burning kilns were displaced by new patent kilns which required less fuel, sometimes using coal or gas. Strong paper bags came to take the place of the lime cask. As a



result of all these changes the rock teams disappeared as did the tall swaying load of lime casks and the farmer's team piled high with soft-wood fuel for the kilns. And as if that were not enough, sailing vessels gave way to great barges towed by steam-propelled tugs to convey the lime to distant markets! In Thomaston all that is left of a once proud industry are abandoned kilns and lime sheds and yawning chasms where Old Mother Nature had so carelessly exposed her limestone ribs.

## *They, the People*

WHEN WALDO, the holder of the Waldo patent, decided to people his holdings on the Georges, he wisely sought to bring thither settlers of one race and one religion. Those who first came in response to his biddings were folk of Scotch-Irish extraction, a few of whom had been educated as Episcopalians; but the greater number were Presbyterians, and most of them exemplary in all the Christian observances. They were already on this side of the water, whole congregations having emigrated from northern Ireland. Some had come to Boston, others to southern New Hampshire, yet others to Pemaquid and Damariscotta. In the interim between their arrival on this continent about 1719 and their settlement on the Georges in 1736 the congregations, as such, were more or less broken up and the few who came to the region were without a pastor.

Waldo, however, as was in the bond, set aside a lot on the western bank of the river for the support of the ministry and in 1740 built a meeting house. The building was small and plain, 30 by 40 feet, and had no belfry. The lumber was secured from the trees on the lot. The windows were glazed—quite a luxury for those days. There the luxury ended. The interior was furnished with a crude pulpit for the preacher and rough benches for the worshippers. Since the psalm tunes were lined off by a leader, there was no choir and no need for a choir stall.

Crude as the structure was, it was quite imposing in contrast to the humble homes in the settlement and any seat other than a rough bench would have been an embarrassing luxury to the majority of the congregation. Most of them had few, if any, Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. If they had no shoes they went barefoot. If perchance they had shoes, they conserved them until they got to the church door. In summer the men wore home-



spun petticoat-trousers, in winter, leather breeches. The feminine members of the congregation, like the men, were clad in homespun and wore neither hat nor bonnet. As was the custom in the old country the full skirt of the dress was lifted to serve as a mantle when necessary. In later years when cotton sunbonnets came into vogue, one thrifty woman in the neighborhood used to wear hers to and from meeting. She carried her best bonnet in a box, donning and doffing it as she arrived and departed. One young bride from the city who presumed to wear a silk gown to meeting was as marked as a poppy in a wheat field and won for herself a reputation for false and foolish pride. There were no sumptuary laws to punish her for her extravagance, but she could not get full satisfaction for her display because the tithing-man was there with his pole to see that all kept their eyes, if not their minds, on the minister.

Although religious services were not held regularly until the coming of the Rev. John Urquhart, a Scotsman in 1775, the members of the congregation had their Bibles and their psalm books to console them. It is said that they all had a fair elementary education, as was the custom in their church, so they could all read. One of their number, while tending his flocks in the old country, had committed many of the Psalms to memory. Like the bards of old, or the early evangelists, he visited the homes of the settlers in turn, reciting the Scripture, commenting on it, and offering prayers. He also officiated at funerals. Acceptable as those services were, nevertheless, whenever a travelling preacher came who could baptize as well as preach it is said that "aged men and feeble women with infants in their arms, accompanied by bareheaded and barefooted children, made long journeys to hear the words of mercy and peace proclaimed in the name of their Redeemer."

When in the fort, where all had to repair during the various Indian Wars, the settlers came under the ministrations of its chaplain. So, take it all in all, considering their number, the spiritual needs of the people were fairly well provided for. Ardent churchgoers, several of them women, who could not get all the soul satisfaction they needed at the fort, frequently walked through the almost pathless woods to Boothbay to attend services.

On a later visit to London to induce other settlers to come to the river, Waldo vouched for the strong fundamentalism of those already there by declaring that they were "chiefly Calvinistical . . . ; and all sorts of Christians except Papists, are allowed the free exercise of their religion."

When the chaplain at the fort died about 1775, the services of the Rev. John Urquhart, a Scotsman, were engaged for the double pastorate in the Upper and the Lower Town. Would that he could have been as good a shepherd as the members of his flock deserved. His chief recommendation was that he was Scotch—the Ten Commandments seemed more forbidding and the Biblical promises sweeter when they rolled from a tongue which spoke with the beloved Scotch burr. He carried on his pastoral duties satisfactorily, catechized the children faithfully, for a time preached acceptably; but he was so busy looking after his flock and his temporal interests that he neglected to keep watch and ward over himself.

He was a married man, but had left his wife behind in Scotland. That was understandable, and the fact that as quickly as he could he built a house on the ministerial lot led his flock to believe they would soon have the pleasure of having a minister's wife to share their joys and sorrows. Mr. Urquhart worked zealously, too, for the incorporation of the town in order that his salary might be raised by taxation rather than by voluntary contributions. With a home and salary assured he should have been making preparations for his wife's coming. Instead, he began to make significant and derogatory remarks about her—wished he had not married in Scotland, but had waited to marry here as he thought perhaps he could have made a more suitable choice. At a wedding he jocosely advised one girl not to be in a hurry to marry as he expected to receive a letter with a black seal from Scotland, and that in the old country a "meenister's leddy" was highly respected. Later he told the girl's mother he expected to receive word of his wife's death. She asked him on what grounds he based his expectation. He replied he "dreem't" that the soles of his shoes came off. That not proving a sufficiently strong argument he bolstered it with another dream in which he "dreem't" that one of his teeth fell out! His suit not



being looked on with favor in that quarter he turned his attention to another girl. He then flaunted a letter with a black seal, dressed himself in mourning, and as a note of proper sadness offered public prayers as conclusive proof of his bereavement.

Like the man who said at his wife's funeral, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" he dried his eyes, began to perk up and before long was carrying on a regular courtship. The good members of his congregation, astounded by such conduct, asked to see the letter concerning his wife's death. He couldn't produce it—in fact had lost it with valuable church records when crossing the river. To the next question, "How was it received?" he was ready with an answer. "It was brought by two strangers." There was no regular mail at that time. Missives were carried by anyone travelling in the desired direction. Neither in Thomaston nor in Waldoboro had anyone seen the two strange messengers he described. The self-evident truth disrupted the congregation completely. Few battles are waged more warmly than those over the dismissal of a minister. One of his most ardent supporters was "Granny James" the midwife, who, comparing him to the Father of her Country declared she "would as soon doubt the patriotism of the one as the purity of the other."

The Presbytery was notified of the scandal and the delinquent member received a summons to appear before that body, but failed to do so. The town, which was in arrears for practically his entire incumbency, had him in its clutches, however, and voted to discontinue his salary. They also voted away his hay. To recover the sums due him Urquhart took the matter to court where his claims were upheld and the town ordered to raise by taxation the amount due him for services rendered as a duly accepted town official.

In the meantime he had married the gullible young lady. The die-hards in his congregation refused to ask for his dismissal so he continued to preach to them and all others who would overcome their suspicions sufficiently to listen to him. His income was variable, as is that of anyone depending upon voluntary contributions.

When his congregation had dwindled to his immediate family,

his mother-in-law, a hired boy, and two staunch friends, a man by the name of Kirkpatrick, and Granny Jeems the contestants on both sides conceded it was high time to take decisive action. Urquhart went to the Presbytery which took up the cudgels in his behalf and the town went to the ballot box and "ordered him to desist from preaching."

Then like a bolt from the blue, came a letter of which the old rascal had never "dreempt." It was from his wife in Wapping, London. She and his sins had found him out! The letter, being unsealed, what might be called an "open letter," was read by the postmaster and many others before it was delivered. That mis-sive sealed his fate so far as Warren was concerned. He left the town bag and baggage and sought fresh fields on the Union River in Ellsworth. For five years he flourished there like the proverbial tares in the Scriptural field of wheat. So far as his former parishioners were concerned he might have remained there unmolested until the Great Reaper gathered his harvest and consigned the tares to the flames.

His wife, on the other hand, was not willing to wait for the time of harvest or the day of Judgment. She was bent on rooting him out root and branch regardless of the consequences to the wheat or the tares. Receiving no reply to her letter she crossed the water to Philadelphia where she barely kept herself and her daughter from starvation by practicing the womanly art of spinning. Her sad plight coming to the attention of the president of Princeton, a Presbyterian, he not only provided for her bodily needs, but started a correspondence which gave the parson in Maine a rousing nightmare.

The communications were conveyed by accredited messengers and could not be ignored. The unworthy divine wrote his wife protesting his innocence, vowing that "He to whom I must give an account in the Great Day is witness that I never meant to deceive you." Their plight was explicitly blamed on the Lord who saw fit to contend with them for the everlasting good of their immortal souls. He begged her to leave him unmolested with his "weakly" wife and four small children, promising in return not to make any demands upon a legacy which she had received! That was a very generous gesture on his part, for at that time



any property that a wife came by belonged legally to her husband. He had the effrontery to suggest that he hoped her sad condition would not drive her to "bad courses" or make her forget the God who made her and gave his Son to be a ransom for her soul. He promised to offer prayers in her behalf that she might be spared such a fate, concluded by wishing her "all the blessings of the upper and the nether springs," and commended her to the Providence who was able to care for her.

Naturally such protestations simply added fuel to the flame. The jilted wife positively refused to be so lightly tossed aside. Taking passage with Capt. Killeran she soon appeared upon the banks of the Georges where she was warmly received by her husband's enemies who were doubtless glad to get the "low-down" on the whole unfortunate affair. The very fact that she was making such great exertion to track down the offender gives some indication as to her temper and her desire for vengeance. The nearer she got to her quarry, the brighter became the glint in her eye and more hysterical grew her speech. She induced four good men to take her to Union River for a reunion with her husband.

When she arrived there she sarcastically greeted the "thunder-struck, abashed, and confounded" man by saying, "Dinna ye cry, Johnny, it's yer ain loving wife ye've been mourning for sae long." Then turning to her helpless rival she showered her with a rain of "opprobrious and scornful epithets" such as never before rolled off the tongue of a Presbyterian minister's wife. After attacking the domicile in true military fashion she took command, ordering her rival about "like a menial servant." The latter, thoroughly terrified, instead of rushing into her husband's arms turned to her former neighbors for protection. In a spirit of chivalry akin to that of the knights of old they snatched her from the clutches of the arrant knave and the claws of the she-dragon and carried her safely back to her family in Warren.

"Left to their own destruction," the dominie and his irate spouse soon accomplished it. Hearing that the second honeymoon had gone on the rocks the party of the second part, wife number two, returned to mother her young brood once more. It would be interesting to know what kind of sermons the parson was preaching in those tumultuous days. Probably he was reach-

ing into the mythical barrel which is supposed to carry a minister over when the tide of inspiration is running low.

Hardly had the parsonage got back on an even keel when it was subjected to another assault. The second time wife number one went under the aegis of the law, being accompanied by a lawyer and his assistant. By devious means the lawyer had himself appointed a deputy sheriff of the region, secured some sort of process, and proceeded to assist in an evening attack on the unsuspecting household. When entrance was gained, treats for the men were demanded. Finding nothing but vinegar, the irate woman threw that over her rival who was cowering under the bed clothes. She then strewed the contents of drawers and chests on the floor and trampled them underfoot, all the while blasting her victims with a battery of fishwife invective. "The man of God" on learning he was to be forced to face an earthly magistrate asked leave to change his clothes, dropped out of a back window and disappeared in the darkness. He was tracked, run down, and finally brought to justice. For "heart balm" the outraged first wife was given one of the minister's farms. The second wife was granted the minister himself, "to have and to hold."

Such goings on were scandalous beyond words. Even in those pioneer days there was a limit to what a pious hypocrite could get away with and what a long suffering parish could stand. The only thing for the "reverend man" to do was to take to the wilderness far from the sound of gossiping tongues. He sought and found asylum in the *Mirimichi* Valley in New Brunswick. One of the strangest features of the whole unfortunate story is that notwithstanding all the evidence against him, and the absolute proof of his guilt by trustworthy witnesses the Presbytery stood by him and exonerated him from all guilt. Evidently a "Presbyterian could do no wrong," or else he was one of the fortunate few whose choice and election had been made sure by predestination.

The chief justification for the recital of this sordid story is that by so doing the character of the settlers may be brought out in bold contrast. The sturdy, upright, pious people who believed in a decent and honorable way of life were naturally for a time utterly deceived by a leader who could so craftily clothe his



speech in the phraseology of the denomination which they loved. To all outward appearances, his orthodoxy was as sound as a nut. Had it been possible for him to live in his pulpit all might have gone well. The worm that was eating at his heart might never have revealed itself. Pulpits were literally and figuratively high in those days and a "man of the cloth" was held in high esteem. It is to the everlasting credit of his parishioners that they did not suspect the rottenness within their minister's heart until he revealed it himself.

There are two other reasons for telling the tale: one is, that dislike for the minister led to the separation of the Lower from the Upper Town, Warren, and the incorporation of the lower town as "Town of Thomaston." The second is, that unfortunately, from that time on in Thomaston Presbyterianism was indissolubly linked with the reputation of Urquhart. Settlers in the lower town would have none of it and gladly embraced the tenets of the Baptist Church as a safer guide to this mortal life and the life hereafter. To this day, it may be safely said, that the Baptist Church still holds the predominant place among the churches of Knox County.

There was no meeting house in Thomaston at the time of separation and nothing on the statute books to compel the town to build one. Oliver Robbins and his good wife were willing to have meetings, both town and religious, at their house, so why should the voters worry? However, an appropriation for the preaching of the gospel and for teaching a working knowledge of the "three R's" was compulsory and that was complied with. The first amount appropriated for that purpose was £50. Since no attempt was made to assess it, for two years following it was easy to secure a vote to generously double it. The vote made a good showing in the reports. The fact of the matter was that the people were too greatly harassed by the exigencies of the Revolution to give much thought to anything beyond mere subsistence and winning the war. Their decision to withdraw from Warren because of their dislike of the minister was a praiseworthy one. Although they could not have what they wanted, they did not want what they could have and would rather have no minister at all than to put up with the rascalion, Urquhart.

Immediately after the close of the Revolution when the good people had won the right to call their souls their own they began to turn their attention to the welfare of the same. Not that their soul's welfare had been wholly neglected. Travelling preachers had given desultory preaching and baptismal service. But with the return of normal living the return of the observance of public worship was once more sought. The wife of Oliver Robbins was an outstanding Baptist. In 1784, word came to her and her friends that a Baptist minister named Case was in Newcastle. Two messengers were sent there to beg him to come to Thomaston. The invitation was so warm he could not refuse. He found that the very day of his arrival, a week day, had been set apart as a day of fasting and prayer—an auspicious beginning for a religious movement. The following Sunday, and for many Sundays thereafter, he preached in the Robbins' barn; and, continuing his missionary efforts everyday in the week he soon had baptized fifty-four converts. His appeal was novel to many of his listeners, in that it was based on a change of heart and life instead of on the old theological doctrines of election and predestination.

As was befitting a sect which claims to derive its teachings directly from the gospel of a Saviour who was born in a stable, the first local Baptist church and the second in Maine was not only organized in a barn, but for eight or more summers held all its meetings in such humble surroundings. In the wintertime services were held in the homes of parishioners. The Rev. Mr. Case remained as preacher throughout those eventful years. He numbered among his flock persons from as widely separated communities as Union, Camden, Jefferson, Newcastle and Vinalhaven. One of his outstanding converts was Elisha Snow, a backslider, who while working in his garden was so overcome by a sense of sin that he was stricken as with a palsy. Unable to move, all he could do was exclaim, "God is just and I am damned!" Later he gave his heart to the Lord, his daughter's hand to the preacher, and the remainder of his life to evangelism. He eventually became his son-in-law's successor.

While everybody felt the need of having a settled preacher, the stumbling block in the way was the necessity for maintaining him. Donation parties had not yet come into vogue. It was the



custom of the day to set aside a ministerial lot where the man of God could dig and delve like Adam for six days a week and then preach like the Apostles on the Seventh Day. As has been noted sums were voted, but never assessed for the support of the ministry, and after the parishioners had got through squeezing their pennies for themselves there were precious few left for preaching the gospel. In Elder Case's pastorate there was not even a ministerial lot for his subsistence. In 1786 and again in 1787 a committee was appointed to "search for convenient Lands for *Personage* (parsonage) *Ministerial*, and school lots." Nothing seems to have come of it. Therefore Mr. Case was forced to subsist on voluntary contributions. So poor was he when he finished his labors in the town that he did not have the means to move his family and his few household goods to another parish, and to the everlasting shame of his church, let it be said, a man not of their number provided the transportation. On parting, this benefactor gave the elder some sound advice—to never again give his services without having his living expenses lawfully secured.

Mr. Case's mantle fell upon his father-in-law who took up his task with all the zeal of the converted back-slider. The father-in-law, having been an astute business man in his unregenerate days, was a man of "substance" so the question of his support was not a pressing one. However a problem, perhaps more fundamental than that arose—in fact led to a spirited controversy. It was the age old question of atonement: "For whom did Jesus die?" Elder Snow, whose mind was tinged with the Presbyterian doctrine of election and predestination, believed atonement was partial and made only for those who were elected and pre-ordained to receive it. An amusing story has been handed down regarding an affirmation he once made concerning the positiveness of his assurance of personal "election." Holding a piece of meat on his fork, Mr. Snow said he was as sure of going to heaven as of swallowing that bit of meat. The meat fell to the floor and was devoured by the dog! One of the deacons, a thorough-going Baptist, believed salvation was for all who would believe and be baptized. The controversy waxed warm as all religious controversies do. Thirty-four members were dismissed from the

church, among them the heretical deacon, who not only left the church, but carried the records with him to Ohio whither he moved in later years. Some of the expelled members returned to the fold, the records never. In a similar controversy in a well-known Massachusetts town the communion service disappeared under like circumstances and its whereabouts was unknown for over a hundred years. A few years ago it mysteriously reappeared. Like a foundling it was left on the church steps one Sunday morning.

In 1794 a most interesting pioneer, a man of vivid personality, settled in the wilderness that is now Rockland. He came from Broad Bay, now Waldoboro. His name was Capt. John Ulmer. Capt. Ulmer was a German Lutheran who had sat under and at times given pastoral assistance to the notorious scalawag, the Rev. Doctor Schaeffer. Dr. Schaeffer was "a smart preacher . . . great singer," an astute business man, and a clever quack. Before he would agree to preach the gospel to his fellow countrymen he saw to it that a ministerial lot was set aside for his use, and wrung an agreement from them that each settler would pay him £3 in currency and give him two days' work a year.

Mr. Ulmer, too, is said to have been a man of signal ability, possessing great confidence, a fluent tongue, and a willingness to pinch-hit in any emergency, but it was never said of him that he used his religion for material advantage. His energies were chiefly occupied with the quarrying and burning of lime, lumbering, and navigation. He was a versatile man. If necessary he jumped aboard one of his vessels and navigated it to its destination. If his neighbors met for a religious service and there was no regularly ordained man to conduct it, Mr. Ulmer mounted the rostrum—probably a hay mow—and preached to them. His speech was a strange mixture of German and English, yet sufficiently intelligible to pass muster. The story has come down that one Sunday, while engaged in expounding the gospel, his roving eye chanced to espy his pigs in his potato patch. To the great astonishment and surprise, not to say amusement of his congregation, he excitedly shouted to his son Jacob, "Donner and blitzen! Yacob, Yacob, dere is da tam hogs in de potatoes! Tousand teu-fel! Run, run, trive dem out and put up de fence!"



Ulmer did well even to attempt to preach in English, for in Waldoboro the "Word" was preached in German. One of Dr. Schaeffer's successors could speak no English and was obliged to confer with brother ministers in Latin!

During the bewildering days of Mr. Urquhart's ministry there had come to Warren as though in answer to prayer a young theologian by the name of Thurston Whiting. Because of his espousal of the Colonial cause, he had got himself into disrepute with the Tories of the Episcopal Church, one of whom branded him as "vicious and idle," and "a horse thief" to boot. His detractor declared that "all who were inclined to favor our present commotions attended his vociferations," adjudging him to be "an angel from heaven" and "a happy instrument of carrying on the blessed work of ruining the Church." Those were days of strong words, hot passions, and quick action. While the detractor was obliged to flee to Nova Scotia, Whiting came voluntarily to Warren. To be sure his errand was material rather than spiritual since he came to look up property to which his wife had fallen heir; but, so prepossessing was his appearance and so convincing his speech that he was almost immediately drafted into service. As time went on the dissident members of Elder Snow's parish engaged him for part time duty in Thomaston. Whiting was a college man, having studied at both Harvard and Brown. He was young, an eloquent speaker, an ardent patriot and a self-proclaimed friend of the people.

Elder Snow, while not a college man, was an interesting preacher, and was said to have "an abrupt energy of expression, apt illustration, and unflinching perseverance in adhering to a point." He excelled in doctrinal sermons which were meat and drink to the adult members of his congregation and not wholly indigestible to the children who were learning to lisp "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." Naturally there was some rivalry between the two preachers. One day Elder Snow noticed that Sullivan, the school teacher, a close friend of Whiting's, was in his congregation. Meeting Sullivan later he mentioned the fact and said, "I suppose you have been to hear Mr. Whiting? Which did you like best?" Sullivan, with seeming naivité, answered that he liked Elder Snow best. Expressing surprise at such a choice be-

cause Whiting was a man of learning and an excellent scholar, Sullivan answered, "That's it . . . Whiting is a man of learning and a man of sense; I wouldn't give a copper to hear him preach."

It is recorded of Snow that one Sunday after a lengthy exhortation to the Christians in his congregation he addressed himself to the "sinners"—all who were not baptized were so classified—saying, "What shall I say to you? Nothing! Not one word! Let God do his own work!" After all these years one can almost feel the hush that fell upon the assemblage as Elder Snow sat down.

From time to time during his pastorate Snow was able to stir his people to the point of a religious revival. On one such occasion he succeeded in converting a Rev. Mr. Baker, a brilliant young Methodist. Baker was baptized and installed as Snow's assistant pastor. For a time the team pulled together remarkable well. Then, Baker began to have some sincere doubts as to certain points in Snow's creed. The limitation of the doctrine of the atonement was one. His honest questioning led him straight into the acceptance of the doctrine of universal salvation which he did not hesitate to preach, and for which cause he was dismissed from the church. Mr. Snow prayed ceaselessly for his young colleague in season and out, asking the Lord to "Take him, Oh Lord, and shake him over the pit of everlasting fire, till he see the error of his ways; but God, don't let him fall in!" The Lord did so shake him and did so spare him, whereupon the doubter acknowledged the error of his ways, was taken back into the church, and helped start another revival that brought many into the fold.

Votes were passed and committees were appointed year after year to look into the matter of the feasibility of erecting a meeting house. Since that could not be done without appropriating considerable money, action was deferred and deferred and deferred. In the meantime the settlement was growing, people were coming in from cities and towns that did have churches. The Revolution was over; prosperity was "just around the corner." Some of the more enterprising citizens concluded that if the town would not assume the responsibility of erecting an edifice, they would. Accordingly, a subscription paper was started in 1792. It took several years to get the necessary pledges but the list



grew steadily. With the coming of Gen. Knox in 1795 and his pledge of "£40 and glass for the house if built in the course of the year" the plans came to fruition. The edifice, "once the chief ornament of the place . . . and the finest in this part of the country," is locally known as "The Old Church on the Hill," and stands today. In its steeple still hangs the Paul Revere bell, also a gift from Gen. Knox. The church, now nothing but a shell, was originally lined by "capacious galleries," graced by an imposing high pulpit, and a novel umbrella-shaped sounding board suspended from the ceiling by a well carved hand and arm. It took two years to complete the structure. The walls and steeple were framed on the ground and raised into position by the concerted action of the builders and volunteers who never missed the fun of a "raising bee." Spectators came from far and wide. The farmer left his plow, the housewife her baking, and the children toddled along to witness the sight. So great was the throng that "the grounds were lined with carts and stands for the sale of liquor, cakes, and other refreshments." Temperance, let alone total abstinence, was not then a moot question anywhere.

The donors to the church building fund were not entitled to pews. Those were sold later for over \$5,000. The writer has tried to find reasons for the demolition of the interior of the edifice. The only explanation seems to be that when the center of the town moved from the "Crick" to the "Corner" and a new Baptist Church was erected there, the owners of the pews took theirs home with them! For a time the sounding board was in the possession of one Perez Tillson. No one knows its final fate. Possibly it was converted into firewood.

The ownership of church pews was taken seriously by all concerned. Like bank stock they were subject to assessment when the church needed funds for repairs. The meeting house might be the "Lord's House," and salvation might be free, but the pews belonged to those who had bought and paid for them. No interlopers were allowed within their sacred precincts. They belonged strictly to their owners. Woe betide any usher who seated a stranger in one that happened to be vacant if the owner later appeared. Ofttimes the intruder if not bluntly asked to move was coldly frozen out by chilly glances and a general air of un-

welcomeness. Pew holders were inclined to be cliquey, too. Churches were not exactly zoned, but when a pew came up for sale, great care was taken to dispose of it to the "right" people. In a sister church in one of the smaller nearby communities the question came up as to what should be done with pews that remained unsold. It was "Voted to nail them up!"

For years the "Church on the Hill" was the only church with a bell for miles around. In answer to its call good and pious folk came from up the river, down the river, and the countryside about. Some came on horseback by way of bridle paths through the surrounding wilderness, others by boat on the tide of the Georges. Gen. Knox was a regular attendant. His capricious wife who had a coach in which she could be conveyed to church, complained that her pew was uncomfortable and had a carpenter make it over. Evidently it was never changed to her liking, for she seldom availed herself of the opportunity to worship.

Denominationally the church was of the "Standing Order" as the Congregationalists were then called. Later their interest was sold to a group of Baptists who had found it inconvenient to attend services at the Gig. The reorganized church in order to revitalize itself took a step that was a most drastic one for that day. It "unanimously voted . . . that total abstinence in the use and sale of spirituous liquors except as a medicine, be required of its members, and that the same be made a subject of discipline." Higher standards were required of the clergy, too. In a nearby church a minister was highly recommended because he did not drink, gamble, or keep late hours! It was not uncommon to dismiss persons from church membership for what would now be called minor offences. In her childhood the author heard it said of a Baptist deacon, "Oh, yes, when he is in Thomaston he goes to prayer meeting, but when he is in Boston he goes to the circus!" An earlier deacon had the temerity to attend a local circus. When called before the governing board to answer for his sin, he said he went because he kind of thought he would like to see a polar bear!

When the "Corner" became the fashionable center of the town a new Baptist Church was erected there and the parish divided again. The new church thrived, the older one gradually died out



until it was finally abandoned as a place of worship. For years the only time the Paul Revere bell was rung was the night before the Fourth when mischievous boys climbed the belfry to add its tongue to the general clamor. Sadly in need of restoration the old church stands to-day as a pathetic example of the public indifference to our historic shrines. The local Daughters of the American Revolution, however, is keeping watch and ward over it against the time when sufficient funds may be forthcoming to restore it to its pristine glory and make of it a fitting companion to its neighbor, the Knox Memorial.

The same year the Old Church on the Hill was built at Mill River a smaller meeting house was erected at the Gig. The organization which erected the latter was the original church which had met in Robbins's barn. Everybody in town was taxed for the support of the two churches. The tax collector was allowed a commission of ten per cent on all collections. Nevertheless, it was difficult to raise sufficient money to maintain the churches and a ticklish problem to apportion it after it was raised. To overcome the latter problem the parish was divided, the Mill River meeting house serving the North Parish and that at the Gig the South Parish.

In the course of the years there have been a Unitarian, a Congregational, a Methodist, an Episcopal, and a Catholic Church in Thomaston. The Unitarian Church reverted to the Orthodox fold from which it made a temporary emergence. The Congregational and Methodist Churches have united to form a Federated Church. The Baptist Church, the daughter of the original church, has never ceased to carry on the good work so bravely begun where Mrs. Oliver Robbins, "the only Baptist in good standing" in the community opened her house across the Bay that the seed of her faith might be shared with her spiritually hungry neighbors.

Not many years after the founding of the Second Baptist Church a Baptist seminary incorporated as Thomaston Theological Institute rented the Knox Hotel and opened its doors to students and its coffers to philanthropists. Few students enrolled and fewer dollars rolled in, so its career was short.

The Episcopal Church was dedicated as soon as the auditorium

was completed. The church was crowded for the dedication. Without warning the props under the floor gave way catapulting the whole congregation into the unfinished basement. Fortunately no one was killed and few were seriously hurt. One hysterical victim extricated herself and started for home moaning and wringing her hands. A neighbor met her and asked, "Aunt Lucy, what's the matter?" To which she replied, "Don't ask me! Both of my legs are broken short off!"

Years later a similar accident was averted in the Catholic Church by a level-headed priest. The occasion was a public wedding. The church was crowded to capacity. During the ceremony someone informed the officiating priest that the underpinning of the church was giving way and the floor buckling. Maintaining his calm he finished the mass and then calmly turned to the congregation and held up his hand, saying, "Please remain seated. I am informed that the underpinning of the church is weak and will probably give way if you all rise at once. So, please keep your seats and go out a pewful at a time."

Limp as rags we slumped back in our seats and did not even take a full breath until we were safely outside the building.

Although at one time the Methodist and Baptist ministers, whose parsonages were on adjoining lots, erected a high board fence between them, on the whole, the relations of the churches were friendly and cordial. Revival services and prayer weeks were conducted jointly by the Protestant denominations, and the memorial service held the Sunday evening before "Decoration Day" always found the Catholic priest sitting on the platform in the town hall with the other clergy. Not so many years ago a Thomaston boy seeking a job in Boston was asked by a clerk in an employment agency, "Are you a Protestant?" To which the boy replied, "No, I am a Baptist." When the clerk responded with, "Then, I guess you are a Protestant all right," the boy said, "We didn't hear anything about *that* down home!"

It goes without saying that there were sharp differences in religious belief, otherwise there would not have been so many denominations in so small a town. So far as one could judge, however, the chief difference was in the form of baptism. The Baptists, practicing immersion, held their baptisms at the river.



In the olden days in the winter time it was not an uncommon occurrence to break holes in the ice to perform the rite. Although no one was expected to catch cold during such ceremonies a baptistry was built eventually in the church. Like all innovations, that met with some objections. One woman, whose daughter was a candidate objected loquaciously, saying she would not have her daughter, Lizzie, baptized in the same water as "old ——," another candidate for the sacred rite!

While the necessity for personal salvation was proclaimed in all the churches and everybody was urged to take "the straight and narrow path" rather than the "broad highway which leads to destruction," stress was laid on "the sociability of heaven rather than the climatology of hell": in other words, "believe and be saved."

Notwithstanding the soft pedalling of the bad place it was indelibly written in the score as every true believer knew. In the town there was a fine upstanding woman, an avowed Universalist, who had a close friend and neighbor, a consecrated Baptist. When the former died, a third neighbor remarked, "Well, she was a fine woman and has certainly gone to heaven," whereupon the other shook her head sadly and said, "I don't know. She was a Universalist, you know!" Although the good Baptist may appear to have been over-fearful for her friend she had a co-believer in the great Henry Ward Beecher. He, too, had a Universalist friend, the famous Dr. Chapin. Once Chapin remarked to Beecher, "Henry, after all there isn't so much difference between us in religious matters." To which Beecher quickly replied, "There's a hell of a difference!"

The good people of the Georges, of whatever creed, have ever striven valiantly to hold aloft the torch of their faith at home and to keep it shining brightly at the masthead of their ships as they went forth to "do business in great waters."

For years the third Sunday evening in every month was observed as "Seaman's Sunday" at the Baptist Church. Such hymns as "Jesus Savior, Pilot Me," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Pull for the Shore," "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning," and "Throw Out the Life Line" were always sung with deep feeling. Moving testimony was given by seafaring people home on short leave.

Prayers were offered for those on the sea who might be in peril or distress. As witness to her faith in the efficacy of those prayers, Mrs. Peter Vesper often testified to the miraculous rescue of herself, husband, and members of the crew when their ship, the *Vesper*, foundered at sea. After they had taken refuge in the ship's boat and the vessel had gone down their hearts almost stood still. Their boat was so small and the waste of waters so vast! Suddenly Mrs. Vesper recalled that it was the third Sunday in the month and that the good people back home would be praying for them. Exhorting everyone to keep up his courage because she knew they would be saved, she set the example by a show of steadfast belief in their rescue. For seventeen days they were tossed about like a cockle-shell. Courage ebbed, energy flagged. When the men at the oars slacked up because of drowsiness it was she who pulled at their beards to keep them awake. Finally a vessel hove in sight. It came nearer and nearer. When it got within range of the boat distress signals were made and their rescue accomplished. The master of the rescue ship stood at the rail as the victims of the disaster came up over the side. When Mrs. Vesper appeared, he welcomed her with open arms, exclaiming, "Why, Almiry, is that you?" and gave her a warm embrace. The rescuer was Capt. Eben Burgess of Thomaston. His ship, the *Stephen Crowell*, had been blown a mile and a half off her course right into the path of the shipwrecked crew!

In the town there were many wealthy people. The womenfolk had gowns of "silk that would stand alone," coats of sealskin, and hats nodding with costly ostrich plumes. The prosperous men-folk had suits of broadcloth with Prince Albert coats and they wore high silk hats. A few of the more meticulous sported white "beavers" in the summer time. An item in the local paper of February, 1882, states, "Capt. W. O. ("Bill") Masters adorns his head with the first white plug hat of the season." Despite the Biblical injunction to "take no thought . . . for your body, what ye shall put on" the owners of all that fine raiment put it on and wore it to church! Unlike the young seaman, later known as "Father Taylor" of the Seaman's Bethel in Boston, who, when he accidentally found himself in the church at "Brimstone Corner," "put in, doffed hat and pennant, scud under bare poles



to the corner pew, hove to and came to anchor," they, knowing just where they were going, with sails set and pennants flying, sailed down the middle aisles of their churches to their allotted pews with as much aplomb as the sea cap'n, who, scorning the aid of a tug, sailed his ship right up to the dock where she was to discharge. Few criticized. It was a heartening thing to know that folk with such finery had their hearts set on higher things. The memory of that Sabbath day pageantry is a radiant one.

The setting for the evening prayer meeting services in the church vestries was the exact opposite of that for the morning services. Anybody could sit anywhere he wished. The members of the congregations were clothed in modest garb and the conduct of the services was absolutely democratic—the most absolute expression of pure democracy the writer has ever known. Hymns were sung. Anybody could say, "Sing number so-and-so, please," and be sure his wish would be granted. After the minister made a few remarks the meeting was thrown open to the congregation. We listened to those who,

"Betwixt the stirrup and the ground  
Had mercy sought and mercy found,"

to those who cared not for riches neither silver nor gold, who would make sure of heaven, who would enter the fold" and to those who were constantly asking in prayer and in song, "Is my name written there?" The lowly kiln-tender or "hired girl" were listened to as courteously as the wealthy matron or the pompous sea cap'n. Anyone who felt called upon to "testify" was given an opportunity, no matter how dull, stupid, or repetitious his testimony was known to be. In fact every Christian in good standing was supposed to testify. It was not uncommon to hear the comment, "Yes, she is a good woman. She goes to meeting, but she never speaks." A retired sea captain who conducted services in a rural school house in a neighboring town dismissed with an "Oh! he is non-compositus anyway," any and all who did not take an active part in his services.

Those whom the author knew best, the little band that gathered regularly in the vestry of the Baptist Church, were an earnest and sincere group of people intensely interested in personal

salvation, to be sure, but the majority did practice what they preached and earnestly sought to bring others into the fold. The thing that puzzled her childish mind was the "sense of sin" that seemed to possess all alike. Faithful, upright men and women would refer to themselves as "the worst of sinners." Not understanding that much of their speech was figurative only, she sometimes felt impelled to tell them that in her rather limited experience she had learned that if she kept a piece of mischief to herself, *sometimes* her mother didn't find it out.

The deepest and most lasting impression of all, however, was that of their firm and abiding faith in a life hereafter. They never pictured this life as a "vale of tears." To them it was a voyage, a voyage from an unknown port to a heavenly harbor. They might be storm tossed, that was to be expected; but, no matter how tempestuous the sea, were there not "lower lights" burning all along the shore? Had not God given them chart and compass? Life's voyage o'er, was there not a Saviour waiting to pilot them to their desired haven? With such assurances, no matter how "dark the night of sin" might settle, how loud the "angry billows roar" they were confident that some day they would out-ride the gale and eventually furl their sails in that heavenly harbor

"Where no storms ever beat on the glittering strand,  
While the years of eternity roll."



## *Book L'arnin' and School Keepin'*

NOT ONE of the signers of the original compact with Waldo was obliged to mark a cross in lieu of his signature. Every one of the little band was able to write. To be sure there was small occasion to sharpen their quills except to write their signatures, yet the ability to do so trivial a thing at that period marks them as men of above the average degree of intelligence and ability. Their recording clerk, Dr. Fales, a most artistic penman and model recorder, used to refer sarcastically to the "obscure penmanship, the false orthography, and intolerable syntax" of his contemporaries, but his accomplishments were of such a high order that few to-day could match them. They could all read, too. Few had access to anything other than the primer or *horn book*, the almanac, the Psalter, and the Bible, but those were almost literally devoured. The surprising thing is that so many of them possessed the rudiments of so many branches of learning. Singly they could do simple surveying; compute tables of weights and measures, a very important asset in days of barter; they could take the sun and navigate a vessel, cast up accounts, draw up all sorts of business papers, and collectively, in their Committees of Safety and Correspondence compose appeals and protests as admirable in their way as the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence.

In a pioneer home nobody was pampered. Children learned to stand on their own two feet as soon as they could toddle. Boys and girls not merely lent but took a hand in all the stirring activities. There was little leisure for anybody. Boys early learned to wield an axe, to handle a boat, to fish, to trap animals and do the hundred and one chores that were supposed to be a boy's work. Girls early became proficient housekeepers. It was not uncommon for a girl to marry at fourteen or sixteen and with

her husband, set up a home of their own in some remote part of the wilderness where her courage met no severer test than did her skill as a housewife. Unlike present day conditions there was no long drawn out period of adolescence. The children stepped immediately from childhood into maturity. Being considered men and women, the majority of them behaved accordingly. To wit: the phrase "from sixteen to sixty" was not merely an alliteration. It was a range of years within whose limits everybody was supposed to be on terms of equality so far as effort and responsibility were concerned. It is a serious question to-day whether we are not losing some of our racial vigor because of our prolongation of the period of infancy. Doubtless many of our youth problems are due to restiveness caused by the imposition of a status of childhood upon the young, when they long to be trying their mettle in an adult world.

Since childhood is the period for instruction, both book and practical, the time set aside by the pioneers for formal schooling was necessarily very meager. At the fort where all the settlers frequently repaired, there was usually a minister in residence upon whom devolved the duty of instructing the youth. If perchance his services were not available there was often a surveyor or clerk who could be persuaded to "keep school" when he was not otherwise employed. Not until it was safe to live in open settlements did log school houses appear. Even then, because of the great distances between the cabins of the settlers and the want of concerted action to work out plans for regular instruction, it was the commoner practice for the various families to hire an itinerant teacher who gave his services for little, if anything, more than "bed and board." The practice of a teacher "boardin' round" continued for many years thereafter. Even after public schools were established, dame, infant, and monitorial schools continued to flourish. Notwithstanding the hit-or-miss policy of education, the seed of learning was never lost. Though much of the little that was sown languished for lack of cultivation it frequently fell upon good ground where it "brought forth sixty and an hundred fold." Many of the ablest business men of the region could boast of only a few months of formal schooling.



Close on the heels of the sinewy pioneers who expected to live by the sweat of their brows, came occasional wanderers with some show of education, who planned to live by their wits as teacher or preacher. Money was scarce and compensation slight. Consequently, when such a one found out that he had to live on, as well as by, his wits he moved on to greener pastures. It is interesting to note that although several of the earliest of those improvident creatures were Irish Catholic, with the Battle of the Boyne raging between them and their hosts from Ulster, yet they got along famously together. No doubt Irish wit was the solvent that made the blending possible.

The earliest of such adventurers was one John Sullivan who came from Dublin, Ireland, in 1778. He was equipped with two strings to his bow. His hands had been trained to make shoes, his mind to impart what he knew. Since not all he had to live by was the awl, he managed by the interplay of his talents to keep soul and body together and lead a fairly happy existence. He first stepped ashore at the Gig wearing "a queer and ambiguous countenance" due to indulgence in a questionable form of cheer. In company with another more respectable looking stranger he presented himself at the home of Elder Snow for entertainment, employment or both. His companion was invited to eat with the family, Sullivan was told to wait for second table. As a show of readiness to make himself useful he asked the Elder if he knew of anybody who needed a shoe-maker. The latter informed him that he knew of none such, stating the only opportunity for work he knew of was for some one to teach school. Whereupon Sullivan revealed that he could serve in that capacity also. Snow proceeded to examine him then and there by putting to him one question, "What is the ground for Justification?" When Sullivan shot back with, "Satisfaction for the offence." Snow was so pleased with his ready wit that he engaged him instantaneously. From that moment it was a matter of give and take between the two. Snow, the sober Calvinist, gave material things, food, shelter, and employment; Sullivan, the drunken Catholic, amply repaid him in dispensing his stock of wit and wisdom or by cobbling.

In addition to his friendship with Snow, Sullivan became one

of the leading lights in a triumvirate made up of himself, Dr. Dodge, and the Rev. Thurston Whiting. Together they read and recited the classics; together they indulged in a game of cards; and, also, together they occasionally indulged in a cup-of-cheer. Whilst the divine never wholly forgot his calling, nor the doctor his profession, Sullivan, once he yielded to temptation was often incapacitated for weeks. He is said to have frequently remarked, "Thanks to the council of Trent, they forbade us to eat meat on Fridays, but let us drink as much rum as we please!" Notwithstanding his weaknesses he must have been a thorough-going student and a natural born teacher, for the most highly educated men in the community to accept him as companion and instructor. He initiated Dr. Dodge into the intricacies of arithmetic, and other mathematically inclined souls into the sheer delights of algebra and geometry. As has been noted elsewhere he had a knowledge of and love for classical literature which he was ready to impart and able to instil into all who would avail themselves of the opportunity.

Another Irishman, a would-be school master, Michael Ryan, made a most formal and formidable application to the town authorities in which he pointed out that the "Knowledge of letters is one of the greatest Blessings that the Divine Majesty of Heaven has bestowed upon the Children of Men," and that "'tis an Estate that no outward Violence or Arbitary power can interrupt or take from us." As an earnest of his seriousness of purpose he also applied for the "Schoolmaster's Lot." Evidently he did not strike so happy a chord as Sullivan or perhaps he had no side-line to commend him, for there is no record of his employment in any capacity by individuals or the town.

A Mr. Walsh from Dublin was allowed to teach for a month on trial, then the town voted not to accept his services. He was followed by two instructors, one a gentleman from Limerick, by name, Emerson, and the other a singing teacher who gave acceptable service as a regular instructor. In his spare time the latter was a hunter and trapper. The teachers, like the preachers, found their tenure much more secure if they had some trade or skill they could fall back upon when money was tight. Whenever an emergency arose, as in our own time, and it was necessary to



curtail expenses, the school budget was the first to be slashed. Another Irish schoolmaster who came to the region was John O'Brien, from Craig, Ireland. One of his sons was the Hon. Edward O'Brien, the ship-building magnate, who perhaps did more so spread the name and the fame of Thomaston than any other individual.

As early as 1790 the town was divided into six school districts. The following year they were re-plotted and a seventh added. The teachers, all men, must have taught chiefly for the love of teaching. The £26 school budget attests to that. One-seventh of that sum surely was not enough to lure mercenaries or to corrupt the true missionary spirit with which all teachers are supposed to be imbued.

Notwithstanding the meagerness of pay and the short and sporadic terms of employment the schools and their masters evidently met with criticism and fault finding, for in 1807 a "superintending committee" was appointed to examine teachers to determine their fitness for their profession scholastically and as disciplinarians. It is claimed that marked improvement in methods and discipline quickly followed.

The only subjects taught at that time were reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling; the only textbooks a spelling book and the Psalter. Of those two, it is doubtful if there was more than one copy of each in any school, and those were in the hands of the teacher. Arithmetic, chiefly a study of the tables, was largely of the variety known as "mental." Paper, pencils, pens and ink were at a premium. In fact, school room appurtenances of any kind were so few as to be practically nonexistent. Learning consisted chiefly in committing facts to memory and reciting them by rote, usually in unison. It is little wonder that lacking all media which might reduce the friction between pupils and teacher, the best disciplinarian was usually the best teacher. Despite his personal laxity, Sullivan was a martinet in the classroom, so severe that one small boy made sick at the sight of him in the road, went home and went to bed, where the stern master found him and compelled his attendance at school.

Scholastic instruction, meager as it was, was not without its fruit. In the year 1800 a Social Library was formed in town. It

was a branch of an organization made up of members recruited from such far-flung outposts as Duck Trap (Lincolnton) and Newcastle, and the settlements between. Meetings, literary and convivial, were held in the various towns. The members were regaled by stirring addresses and allowed the privilege of perusing books bought from moneys collected for dues and fines. By a process of amoeba-like division and sub-division the society finally evolved as the Thomaston Athenaeum. Its famous prototype in Boston was incorporated in 1807. At the peak of its prosperity, 1831, the eastern branch of the Thomaston society boasted a collection of five hundred books and considerable chemical and philosophical apparatus. Not at all bad for a settlement that less than one hundred years before was a howling wilderness.

While at that time there was no public high school there was, fortunately, for twenty-five years a cultured, devoted and public spirited minister by the name of Woodhull in the Congregational pulpit. In addition to his pastoral work he gave lectures, taught in a private school and served as superintendent of the common schools. Coming to Thomaston as he did fresh from Bowdoin and the Bangor Theological Seminary he had no high-falutin' ideas about the necessity for showy buildings or a large faculty. Bowdoin at that time boasted two buildings; one 50 ft. by 40, three stories high; another 100 ft. by 42, four stories high and its entire faculty consisted of a president, two professors, and two tutors! So earnest a student was Mr. Woodhull and so broad his attainments it might have been said of him as of Mark Hopkins that "to sit on one end of a log, with him on the other, was a liberal education." As Mr. Woodhull's term of service was drawing to a close the Rev. Oliver Jordon Fernald, a graduate of Harvard and the Cambridge Theological School, came to town as pastor of the Unitarian Church. At first he met with a mild form of persecution because of his theology and because of the note of joy he tried to introduce into church affairs. A Christmas tree, the first at any local church, was branded as "Popery" by the scandalized orthodox element in town.

Like the high-minded Unitarians of his day, Fernald was a crusader whose one purpose was to make his own corner of the



world a better place in which to live. If he could not make Thomaston a veritable Eden he might perhaps do the next best thing, make it a second Boston, and that was what he immediately set out to do. In addition to his clerical duties he took a lively interest in education, moral and scientific lectures, Free-masonry, and all social institutions. So cordial and sincere was he that it was not long before he established himself as the leader in social betterment. As a member of the school board and later as superintendent of schools he worked unceasingly to improve the schools.

His outstanding contribution to the school system was the introduction of what one alarmed parent called "degraded" schools. His zeal to bring about that important educational innovation brought his career to a sudden close. On his way home from Boston whither he had gone to make a closer survey of the grade system, he collapsed and died within a few hours. It should be recorded as a tribute to the breadth of mind of the townspeople, who honored themselves in honoring him, that the outpouring of grief at his death was second only to that manifested when their other great benefactor, Gen. Knox, passed away.

Fernald's grade system called for the establishment of eleven primary schools taught by females, four grammar schools taught by males, and a high school. As proof of his powers of persuasion, the amount of money raised per capita for the school population was the highest in either Knox or Lincoln counties and above the legal requirement!

One of the eleven elementary schools was located at "Punkin Hill." Of the building erected in the early sixties I quote from a description by a former pupil, "The land sloped sharply to the south of the road. A high wall was built across the south line and the lot filled in. This building was called fine for those days although it lacked the comforts of modern schools. The heat came from an old box stove which took in a two-foot stick. The boys had the pleasure of sawing the wood and the girls brought brooms for a weekly clean up. The toilet was built on the south side of the wall and protruded some two feet beyond. Instead of the usual seat it had a stout round pole suspended above an aching void of some ten feet. When the warm south winds blew

across the dark grass of the field below—oh, Arabia! 'But when winter's snowy pinions' came, shades of Peary and old "Doc." Cook! The North Pole was then but a joke."

While the town was so generously supporting the elementary schools it balked many years over establishing a high school. Finally in 1844 a number of public spirited citizens decided to wait no longer and banded together to raise by private subscription funds for an academy. A charter was granted the incorporators as well as one-half a township of land, the sale of which made possible the erection of a small building, so truly Grecian in style that with its columns and its portico it might have graced the Grove of Academe itself. A modest tuition was charged. In addition to the classics and other academic subjects normal courses were offered for the training of teachers. In the passing of the years the academy was turned over to the town and a public high school was established.

Dating from Sullivan's day and his formation of a little clique of savants, there had been a succession of clubs in the town. In some, the members raised their voices in debate, in some they lent their ears for lectures, and yet in others they opened their pocket books for scientific instruments and spent their spare time manipulating them. The local appetite for oratory must have been insatiable, for wherever there was a concourse of people, at a picnic, a Fourth of July celebration, or a funeral, there was an orator practicing the arts of spell-binding. The lyceum lectures covered a wide range of subjects from Hieroglyphics to Human Races. The Constitution and Ireland and the Irish came in for their share of attention, too. Lucy Stone lectured on Woman's Rights and J. G. Saxe and Bayard Taylor included Thomaston in their itineraries, but for some reason both of the latter failed to appear.

One gets the impression from the old records that the members of the clubs and lyceums were chiefly of the masculine persuasion. It was the women, however, who patronized the libraries. In the prosperous Fifties there were two such institutions in town devoted to the broadening and cultivation of the mind of the gentler sex. One was known as the "Ladies Library," the other as the "Female Library." Although the number of volumes in the latter



outnumbered those in the former two to one, the ladies were not so hopelessly outnumbered. In Thomaston all the females were "ladies."

The real stimulus for the very great desire for culture and intellectual refinement sprang from the everyday life of the people themselves. Children born at sea, learned to walk on ship board or in foreign lands. The first impressions of scores of boys and girls were of street scenes in San Francisco, Liverpool, or Shanghai. They sailed over sunken villages off the coast of Chile, they played on the beaches of Australia, they visited and made friends with the Pitcairn Islanders, they went to the zoo in London, to the bazaars in Batavia, and sightseeing in every important port in the world.

Even the few children who staid home did not miss out completely, for the world came to them in the form of stories, curios, and small animals from its farthest corners.

One of the author's earliest recollections is of being bowled over by a fan-tailed sheep from Asia Minor! An aunt had brought a pair of sheep from that far-away land. They were in the doorway feeding at the time of the encounter. The ram took one look and butted the writer over quicker than one could say Jack Robinson. The poet may sing that,

"The East is East and the West is West  
And never the twain shall meet,"

but the author knows better, for she of the West so early met the East in the form of those fan-tailed sheep from Asia Minor.

Another more delightful reminiscence is the ravishing odor of a vial of attar of roses from Constantinople. That was kept in the top bureau drawer in the spare chamber and scented the whole bureau. The same aunt who brought the sheep brought that also, as well as towels from Turkey, and dresses from Paris. The dresses were acknowledged to be very stylish—but the sewing! The French seamstresses were "very poor sewers." Other objects of interest which brought the other side of the world very near were ostrich eggs, monkeys, and diamond ore from Africa; Kauri gum and pressed ferns from Australia; views of Dunedin, New Zealand; and native handiwork from Samoa. All of these were

among the first objects to impress themselves on our childish minds. When it came time for pupils to be promoted from the third to the fourth grade a member of the school committee visited the "old Bailey" and put the candidates for promotion through their scholastic paces. A list of the imports and exports of Egypt and other countries rolled off our tongues glibly. Our Waterloo came when we were asked to define continent, island, archipelago, peninsula, promontory, isthmus, and strait. No one had ever brought a single one of those home for our edification and enlightenment. We had never seen any of them on the parlor whatnot. Had the author not known her tables she might be in the third grade yet.

The broadening influence of travel was not confined to the sea cap'ns and their families. The mates and second mates were often accompanied by their wives, the wife of the second mate sometimes acting as stewardess; and practically every able-bodied boy signed up sooner or later as cabin boy or for a berth before the mast. What a young sailor lad did not see and learn in his peregrinations from port to port is not worth recounting. The result of such a mode of life on the small, well-knit community was the development of personal self-assurance and a community world-mindedness which can not be equaled even in these days of the blaring radio. Everybody was interested in everything everywhere because he or his neighbors had been everywhere and had seen practically everything worth seeing. Since travel was an integral part of the mode of life few were blasé about it and seldom stopped to reckon how many times they had rounded the Horn or crossed the Atlantic. Their vessels were their seven-league boots. They took the world in their stride.



## *Doctors—"Yarb" and Regular*

THE SCOTCH-IRISH settlers who came to the Georges were members of a vigorous race. The fact that they or their immediate ancestors had weathered the Siege of Londonderry goes to prove it. During that trying time the populace of the besieged city was reduced to eating rats. The children must have suffered woefully from malnutrition, yet those who survived grew up to be sturdy men and women, who not only settled and tamed a wilderness, but, while doing so, managed to raise families of thirteen or fourteen children, many of whom rounded out a score of years beyond the allotted three score and ten. Yes, they were a "tough lot." Notwithstanding that fact, they did suffer from the accidents and ills that flesh is heir to, and when home remedies failed were obliged to call a doctor.

Before the settlers came a fort had been built and manned. A physician was enrolled as a prominent member of the staff. His duties were chiefly to care for gunshot and other wounds, to bind up broken bones, cure frost-bite, and extract teeth: in other words to give what would to-day be called "first aid." A fort was not a hospital and could not be converted into one. If a member of the staff was "spleeny" or stricken with a malady that required prolonged medication the first thought was to find for him an asylum elsewhere. Space was too limited to harbor any other than the able-bodied.

When the Scotch-Irish settlers arrived, with them came a "Dr." Moses Robinson, a yarb (herb) doctor. His title was evidently a courtesy title, for it is recorded concerning him that "having some knowledge of roots and herbs and the use of the lancet" he made some pretensions to skill in medicine. He was no quack, however, for he tried according to the best light given him to minister to the sick and suffering. To provide himself with med-

icines for his pharmacopoeia he cultivated an extensive herb garden. He gathered, dried, and powdered or steeped the herbs to make them into pills or teas for combating the most common "complaints."

Doses were big and bitter. The bigger and more bitter the better. Many herbs were needed. Thoroughwort tea, one of the bitterest brews to assail a man's gullet, was a favorite remedy for jaundice, biliousness, and to wake up a sluggish system. Skull-cap catnip, and camomile were extensively used for their soothing properties. Flax seed was steeped and used internally as a tea and externally as a poultice. As a poultice there was nothing obnoxious about it, but as a tea it was one of the slimiest concoctions ever foisted on a helpless invalid. Possibly the curative properties of many of the herbs were psychological. When the remedy was worse than the disease the majority of patients hastened to get well. If an ailment refused to yield to herbs there was always recourse to the time-honored practice of either "blistering" or "blood-letting." As the latter was the last word in the then current field of medicine, by practicing it "Dr." Robinson raised himself almost to a truly professional level.

Blood-letting was also practiced as a form of preventive medicine. The Rev. Dr. Schaeffer of neighboring Broad Bay, now Waldoboro, deluded his parishioners into believing it was as necessary a spring ritual as the taking of sulphur and molasses. Tradition has little to say of the fees charged by local doctors for their "skill" except in the case of the last mentioned practitioner. Believing a laborer was worthy of his hire he often exacted in return for his services a week's labor from the head of a bled family, thereby "bleeding" them in every sense of the word. If perchance any of his charges were ill, and required medical attention he oftentimes was not satisfied with less than a sloop-load of wood as a fee. He condoned this sharp practice by saying that when "I have my *plack* coat on, *den* I am a minister . . . but when I have my green coat on, *den* I am a *toctor*." It didn't really matter which coat he was wearing, for if, in the round of his ministerial duties, he performed a marriage ceremony, preached a funeral sermon, or officiated at a baptism he not only charged a fee, but demanded its payment in advance!



A son, long associated with Dr. Robinson, carried on when the latter passed to the realm where there is no need of a physician. Perhaps it is a significant fact, indicative at least of changing professional standards, that the son did not follow his father's example and assume the title of "Doctor." Men specially trained were coming into the field. Bitterly deploring the fact the author of a doctor's book in local use at the time lamented that things had come to such a pass that people preferred a young doctor who had been to college even though he had no more than "rubbed his backsides against the walls of the same" to one dispensing home remedies no matter how experienced he might be. One of the tried and true remedies he advocated was for the cure of shingles. It was a simple remedy, one that anyone could apply. All one had to do was to find a black cat on a dark night, kill and skin it, and while the pelt was still warm wrap it fur side out around the affected part!

For many years childbirth cases, which now form a large part of medical practice, were left in the hands of accommodating midwives who usually officiated without thought of compensation. That fact, coupled with prevailing feminine modesty, kept the custom alive for many years.

Granny James, Mrs. James of the Upper Town, was perhaps the most outstanding midwife of the region. Her services were in demand throughout the county. When a breathless rider drew rein at her door she dropped everything, jumped into her own side-saddle or into her husband's breeches and his saddle and dashed off through the wilderness. She allowed neither darkness, rain, snow, nor raging waters to daunt her once she had started to race with the stork. Her grand-daughter has recorded of her that she usually served without pay and that "her sympathy for her sex, in their fearful hour of need, made her willing to forego both convenience and comfort to render them relief." She is reputed to have never lost a case.

Since neither Granny James nor any other local midwife left a diary or personal notes and none of the children was born in public, it is impossible for the author to give here the details of any "borning." Let it be assumed then that the children all came into

the world in the usual way. Some had a harder time than others, but none arrived in a manner sufficiently unusual to warrant recording it in the local histories.

There was a very able man in the town by the name of David Fales, who had had much more training as a physician than Dr. Robinson, yet he had little practice, because, unlike Granny James he was slow in answering calls. In a pioneer settlement where a doctor was not summoned until a case became an emergency, a reputation for speed was one of the most important recommendations a doctor could have. Consequently when Dr. Ezekiel Dodge came to town and built up a reputation for both speed and positive diagnosis he was welcomed with open arms.

Dr. Dodge settled in the northeastern part of the town on the long wrinkle in the earth's crust to the westward of Lake *Chickawaukee*. That low mountain, known to the Indians as *Madambettox*, was the same mountain that had beckoned Capt. George Weymouth up the Georges on his voyage of discovery. It was on the eastern slope of the mountain, overlooking the lake, that Dr. Dodge built a substantial and commodious brick dwelling from which he carried on his profession, that of a practicing physician. Because of his extensive holdings on the mountain side and possibly because of the vigorous manner in which he defended his claims thereto, the entire elevation soon came to be known to the pale-faces as *Dodge's Mountain*. No present-day doctor would for one moment think of locating in such an out-of-the-way place, but in the latter part of the eighteenth century everybody was more or less remote from everybody else and any doctor in active practice expected to spend practically all his time in the saddle as he journeyed from patient to patient. What mattered a few more miles, if at the end of the trail, he could feast his eyes on one of the most beautiful panoramas of the whole Maine coast?

Between the Revolution and the coming of Knox to claim his wife's share in her ancestral estate there were a number of squatters in the vicinity of the mountain. Since there was no one to say them nay they cut the trees, opened up the clearings and started cultivating the land. Dr. Dodge must have been numbered among the squatters, for he had serious trouble with some of his



neighbors over conflicting claims to the land. That would probably not have happened had he had a clear title to all he wished to possess.

Just before the turn of the century Darius Brewster, son of Zadoc "who was the eldest son of Joseph, who was the 4th son of Nathaniel, who was the first son of William of Duxbury, who was the only son of Freelove, who was the younger of the two sons of William, the world renowned Elder & Governor of the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth, who was a native of Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England, & whose empty chair, of Mayflower notoriety now stands in Pilgrim Hall" came to Thomaston to settle near his father Zadoc. Evidently Darius knew a good piece of land when he saw it. Unfortunately, a portion of the tract he selected, a bit of meadow land, was also claimed by Dr. Dodge. Brewster had cut the grass on it one season and was about to do so again when he received word that he need not bother as the doctor intended to cut his own hay. Brewster, a Revolutionary soldier, got his "dander" up and sent back word he would shoot anybody who tried to stop him. Nothing daunted, the doctor rounded up a crew of men who were willing to go with him to the meadow. After "histing" a flag they started in to mow with their sickles. Brewster, hearing of the trespass, appeared upon the scene and ordered them to desist. No attention was paid to his command. Thereupon, he disappeared for a time only to creep back through the bushes with his trusty musket. He aimed and fired at Dodge's legs. Just as he did so the victim stooped and received the full charge of shot "in the fleshy portion of his posteriors."

When Brewster saw what he had done he took to the woods where he remained in hiding until he learned that the doctor would recover. He then gave himself up for trial. He not only had to serve a term of imprisonment for taking the law into his own hands, but lost his claim to the disputed land to which it is said he really had a better lien than his opponent.

There was another shooting fracas in which the principals were reversed. A trespasser, a repeated offender, was shot by the doctor. Since the assailant was the only physician in the vicinity

the victim later had to present himself in person to Dr. Dodge for the removal of the shot. Whether or not the doctor probed any deeper than necessary or charged an extra large fee for his services, tradition does not say.

It has been said that if a man wants to make a success in life he should see to it that his father is a minister. Dr. Dodge attended to that and either because of or in spite of the fact attained a measure of professional, business, and political success that gave him a prominent place in the community. In his youth he was singled out as a flagrant example of the old adage about "Deacon's daughters and minister's sons." His father, a pious parson in Pembroke, Massachusetts, finding him a problem sent him to dwell for a time with a brother minister in North Yarmouth. Under the latter's tutelage the lad was to prepare for college. He showed some natural scholarly aptitudes, especially in the languages and in literature, but drove his preceptor nearly frantic by his many practical jokes. Once he put a pack of cards in the tail pocket of his guardian's Sunday-go-to-meeting coat. The good parson in the midst of his discourse needing to mop his heated brow, put his hand in his pocket to pull out his handkerchief and, to his great mortification and surprise, scattered the cards all about him.

Notwithstanding his pranks Ezekiel managed to imbibe enough learning to enable him to enter college. His stay there, however, was fairly brief. He was expelled for participation in a dramatic performance burlesquing the government.

With whom he studied medicine the records do not say. Even had he finished his college career he could not have fitted himself for his chosen profession there, for it was the custom of the day for doctors as well as lawyers to gain professional training and experience by reading and practicing with some individual already established in his profession.

When Dr. Dodge came to the Georges about 1789 he was a full-fledged physician with a title to his name and his medicine kit in his saddle-bags. A contemporary said Dodge was "capable, of a polite and pleasing exterior, though often indulging in irreverence and profanity; prompt at every call, bold and decided in his



practice, he soon flashed into unbounded favor, and continued for thirty years to enjoy the most extensive professional business of any physician in this and all adjoining towns."

He possessed a crude wit of a sort that really enhanced his reputation as a doctor. Once when called to the bedside of a man who had a very large nose, he questioned him as to his symptoms in various parts of his body ending with, "And how's your nose?" The patient replied, "My nose, oh, that's all right." To which the doctor rejoined, "Then you are all right for that's the biggest part of you."

It is said he would notify patrons who were in arrears that if they did not settle their accounts he would come and board with them for several days. As he was a hearty eater, a man of his word, and had been known to collect in such a manner he usually received his pay promptly. In so far as midwives competed with physicians Mrs. James was one of Dr. Dodge's competitors. Except for such amateurish practitioners Dr. Dodge had the field of medicine to himself.

Following professional custom Dr. Dodge took various apprentices under his wing and inducted them into the mysteries of materia medica. A Mr. Webb, an unsuccessful merchant, was induced to become one of his students and later entered into partnership with him. Evidently the term of preparation and preliminary practice depended wholly upon the pupil's aptness, since, at the same time another pupil, Dr. Bernard, after short preparation, set up in practice for himself, but was moved about like a man on a chess-board as it suited Dr. Dodge's convenience in warding off other competitors. Dr. Dodge said of his two students that "Bernard was gifted with a good eye to discover disease, but had little knowledge of the proper remedies, whilst Webb was skilled in the knowledge of medicine, but had no faculty for discerning the symptoms; so that if he could send both together, they might make *one* first rate physician."

In addition to probing for buckshot and prescribing purgatives, emetics, pellets and pills (he rolled his own) the doctor also dabbled in real estate, in business, in "coasting," and in politics. He was really a versatile and talented man with a keen lookout for the main chance. He had diversions, too, one of the chief

being literary declamation. A trio composed of himself, a local minister and Schoolmaster Sullivan, spent many happy hours impersonating characters in Shakespeare's plays and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Dodge was said to be especially successful in portraying Lucifer, who would "rather reign in hell, than serve in heaven." Sullivan and Dodge also indulged in mathematical studies. After getting an insight into the doubling and trebling action of compound interest, Dodge was heard to exclaim, "if I had only understood this rule soon enough, I would have owned half of Thomaston by this time."

So strong was his ambition for professional domination that he would brook no rivalry. Any and all new comers in the field either became his partners, took his orders, or suffered from his enmity. One such practitioner, a Harvard graduate, who neither became his partner nor took orders from him, fell into the latter class. For a time the rival prospered. Then, losing his wife, his practice, and his spirits he was found dead in a field, presumably from an overdose of laudanum. In a furore of righteous indignation Dr. Dodge attempted to prevent the burial of the deceased in the village cemetery, threatening that if it were allowed neither he nor any of his family would ever be buried there.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Tradition says that Dodge was not privileged to see the next interment nor to decide who should lie beside him. It was his neighbors and friends who saw him borne through the pathway to his last resting place. Since he made no pretensions to religious experience the officiating clergyman, as was the custom of the day, undoubtedly left no question in the minds of his hearers as to whether Dr. Dodge was serving or reigning in the realm to which he had gone.

The presence of germs being undreamed of neither doctor nor laymen in that far off day knew anything of any consequence about infection or contagion. Some explanation being necessary all sickness was almost universally laid at the door of Divine Providence. This Providence visited it upon both individuals and society because of their sins or the sins of their forebears. Sometimes it was hard to reconcile the facts, but few questioned the belief. Did not the Good-Book say, "The Lord shall smite thee



with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with extreme burning?" When affliction came like a bolt from the blue what other explanation could there be?

About 1854 there was a case of accidental shooting in town. According to all the laws of cause and effect the victim, a young man, should have died of the wound or of complications resulting from it. Instead, a miracle happened. When the ball passed through the right lobe of his lung the victim fell as though dead. While the attending surgeon was unsuccessfully probing for the ball, the patient recovered consciousness whereupon he was "bled largely, and put upon rigid *antiphlogistic* treatment for three weeks." Suddenly, according to the story, a distressing cough developed and "portions of his several garments, were expectorated in the order in which they were worn, so little changed that the buckram of his coat and the elastic of his suspenders when restored to their places showed little appearance of ever having been separated!". . . . Three months from the time of the accident he shipped as an able bodied seaman, which he proved to be.

Hygiene, personal and community, was still a "wave of the future." If a lady (men were never so affected) had a case of "B.O." sufficiently pronounced so that she did not have to wait for her best friends to tell her, she combatted it by using musk or some other strong perfume. The common drinking cup was just that in the home, the school, and at the communion table. Children ate each other's apple-cores and chewed each other's spruce gum. Mothers sometimes chewed food before putting it into the mouths of their babies. In spite of all these deplorable and unsanitary habits, epidemics of serious proportions were comparatively rare. Occasionally "canker quinsy" (diphtheria) would claim several victims in one family. Typhoid fever, too, was a dread visitant, as was consumption, both "old fashioned" and "galloping." On the whole, however, considering the fact that the inhabitants of the town were constantly coming from and going to all parts of the world, and that vessels, both Thomaston and foreign, were tying up at the local wharves after visits to regions where epidemics were rife and hygiene absolutely nil, it is surprising that more virulent germs were not brought to the little community.

The inhabitants knew of and dreaded the ravages of yellow fever, smallpox and Asiatic cholera. There was scarcely a family that had not lost and buried at least one of its members in Havana, Shanghai, Batavia, or New Orleans. In certain seasons our own southern ports were as notorious yellow-fever spots as any in the world. As a rule the strictly tropical diseases were confined to the lower latitudes. Smallpox, however, was ready for a scourge anywhere. Therefore terror struck at the hearts of the village folk when one day in 1827 the brig *Thomas and William*, Capt. Colley, 19 days from Limerick, Ireland, with coal and 68 Irish passengers, arrived in the Georges, anchored half a mile below the wharf, and reported one of the crew . . . sick of a disease feared to be smallpox.

A doctor visited the vessel and not being able to make a definite diagnosis ordered her to stay at quarantine and hoist a red flag. In the night the patient died. The vessel was then cleaned and after a few days the crew came ashore. In due time with a clean bill of health the vessel sailed for New York, but was obliged to put into Boston because the captain and three of the crew had come down with the dread disease. Capt. Colley died. When word reached Thomaston the town was panic stricken. One of the most prominent citizens made a mad dash to Castine for serum, making the round trip in twenty-four hours, an outstanding feat for that time. The terrified populace willingly sought vaccination and urged the erection of a hospital on a point of land across the river, to this day called *Hospital Point*. Due to the fact that many of the town folk had been vaccinated some years before, there was no epidemic.

Another small, isolated hospital, called the *pest-house* stood many years on the southern slope of Dodge's Mountain. The isolation of those two structures indicate that it was believed proximity was a factor in contagion. It would be interesting to know how much nursing care and medical attention patients confined in either place received. It would be unthinkable that they were left to survive or perish alone!

A few years later, in 1832, because of the spread of Asiatic cholera in many American ports, a local board of health was organized. It was formed just in the nick of time, for soon after a



vessel came up the river with one of its crew sick of the dread disease. Before accepting the order of one member of the board to remain at quarantine, the captain demanded that the entire board of health visit the vessel for a consultation. Acceding to his request, the members were momentarily nonplussed to find that the captain planned to hold them as prisoners aboard the vessel as long as they kept him in quarantine. Unintimidated, the board refused to rescind its order and after laying down the law succeeded in convincing the captain that though he was master of his vessel he was not dictator to their august body, and that unless he liberated them he would be subject to a heavy penalty. They won their point and were set ashore in the ship's boats.

The most outstanding member of that board of health was Dr. Moses Ludwig, native of Broad Bay and a son of one of its most distinguished families. He was a graduate of Middlebury College. Two of his brothers, also physicians, were graduated from Bowdoin. Another brother was a druggist in Boston. Dr. Ludwig was an able, scholarly man of broad interests. For a time he sat in the state senate. In 1851, wishing to see the land of his fathers, he made a "grand tour" of Europe. His neighbors all about him were making grand tours everywhere, but he was one of the first citizens of the town to fare forth as a traveler for travel's sake.

His visit to the German Fatherland was most disappointing. Like all the children in the Broad Bay settlement he had heard his relatives and neighbors bewail their hard lot and pour execrations upon the head of Waldo for his failure to make adequate plans for their reception when they arrived on these shores. They remembered the beautiful cathedrals in Frankfort, Cologne and other German cities, and bitterly bemoaned the fact that they had been lured away from them to the howling wilderness on the Maine coast. They had forgotten the *chafes* and the *frets*, the bonds and the burdens that had borne down upon them so heavily that they had been more than willing to stake everything in a new land. To his great surprise Dr. Ludwig found Germany to be "far from being a free country . . . the people are despotically ruled . . . the lower classes are entirely destitute of the means of improving their condition." He then makes this reflection, "though a country from which more of the elements of free

dom sprung, than any other, it is now, unquestionably, among the least free of all the nations of Christendom." Backward as it was, it evidently was *then* a part of Christendom.

About the same time Dr. Dodge came to Thomaston there was a physician in Germany who was working out a new medicinal method. His name was Hahnemann and his revolutionary idea was that disease was not cured by combatting it, but by inducing symptoms similar to those produced by it. To distinguish his school of thought from all existing schools he coined two words "homeopathy" and "allopathy." Like Jimmy, the only soldier in the army who was in step, he alone was in the homeopathic class and arrayed against all the rest of the medical world, an "allopathic" one. Dr. Hahnemann was persecuted and driven from one city to another, yet his idea took hold and about three-quarters of a century later his theory bobbed up in Thomaston.

Now, one of the outstanding characteristics of the good people of the town was the firmness of their convictions, and their loyalty to them. If they were Baptists, they were Baptists; if they were democrats, they were democrats, if they were "*all-paths*" they were "*all-paths*" and defied any "*home-path*" to convert them. Perhaps homeopathy would have been more cordially received if its homeopathic pills had not been so tiny and sugar coated! Why, you could take a whole bottleful of them and never know it! "*All-paths*" believed in going after a disease with hammer and tongs, in using pills both bitter and big, in taking remedies that did not, like the victim of the modern submarine, sink without a trace, but left wry faces and bitter palates in their wake. By so doing they knew they had taken something. The "*all-paths*," not only believed in allopathy, but were willing to take its medicine to prove it.

The author's family were Baptists, democrats, and "*all-paths*" and the family stood by its guns. We knew that Baptists were sure of heaven, that democrats had the only sane political policy, and that if a sick person called an "*all-path*" he had a reasonable chance of recovery, but if he called a "*home-path*" he was willing to die! Space does not warrant chronicling the data of the many faithful physicians of both schools who have ministered to the sick and suffering in Thomaston during more recent years.



Of the author's family physician, simply because she knew him best, she would like to say that he was a family doctor of the old school, in other words he was nurse as well as physician and surgeon. In a day when trained nurses were practically unknown he was obliged to linger by many a bedside to perform duties that are now turned over to a trained attendant. When specialists were not easily reached for consultation, he was obliged to make decisions of great import; when dentists were few and hospitals far away, he was called upon to act both as dentist and surgeon, extracting teeth or amputating arms and legs with no other help in many cases other than that of distraught relatives and friends. He served not only the immediate vicinity, but the whole countryside as well, a stupendous task, for telephones were so few as to be negligible and automobiles had not yet appeared. Day and night, in summer's heat and winter's blinding snow, or in the spring with mud to the hubs of his carriage wheels, he went to and fro the length and breadth of the land carrying comfort and consolation to the sick and suffering. When his skill failed then family and friends knew the case was hopeless.

The doctor's son followed in his footsteps. For a time people were loath to accord "Young John" the same confidence given to the father, "Old John," but in the course of the years he made a place for himself and the community was touched and ennobled by the faithful ministrations of a worthy father's worthy son.

In the Farmers Almanac for 1836 is an announcement of the "Medical School of Maine—Bowdoin College" which reads: "The Medical Lectures commence at this Institution about the middle of February, annually, and continue three months. The fees for all the lectures are \$50, and graduating fee, including Diploma, \$10 more. The library contains about 3,000 volumes, and is one of the best in the United States. The anatomical cabinet is amply furnished.

"The following subjects on which lectures are given: Theory and Practice of Physic by John Delamater, M.D.; Anatomy and Surgery, by Reuben Mussey, M.D.; Obstetrics, & c, by James McKeen, M.D.; Chemistry and Materia Medica by Parker Cleveland, M.D.

"A full-fledged physician with a diploma in his hand in three months for sixty dollars!

"Honor the physician with the honor due unto him;  
For verily the Lord hath created him.

· · · · ·  
Yea, there is a time when in his hands is the issue of life:  
For by his skill doth he make supplication unto the Lord,  
That he may prosper him in giving relief,  
And send healing for the maintenance of life."



## *A Democratic Stronghold*

THOMASTON HAS always been right on deck so far as politics is concerned. Her location on the seacoast, her maritime interests, and her pattern of life resulting therefrom, demanded that she be there in order to avoid the rocks and shoals of one party or lest she be caught in the undertow of another. To this day representatives of both major parties hold separate caucuses to name candidates even for town office.

The success of the Revolution was of paramount interest to the town. Her inhabitants were overwhelmingly for it. Anybody suspected of being a Tory or having traffic with Tories was given short shrift. However, as soon as the treaty of peace was signed there came a logical reason for two parties. There were those who, while wholly loyal to the infant republic, would limit suffrage and maintain much of the pomp and state of the mother country. Even Washington was willing to be called his High Mightiness; Those who belonged to that school of thought were Federalists. Those who would break with all the old tradition, give up the clap-trap of office and position, extend the power of suffrage, and strengthen state's rights, were dubbed Republicans. The national leaders in the former party were of course Washington and Adams; in the latter, Thomas Jefferson. The chief local exponents of the two parties were Maj. Knox on the one hand and Dr. Dodge on the other.

In his History of Maine, Williamson says "Party spirit so long as it appears in the robes and temple of truth, is a minister of light for the good of the people. Otherwise, seizing upon the flambeau and poisoned darts of abuse, it becomes a fell destroyer of moral worth, fair fame, and everything else essentially valuable to society." Speaking of Maine politics in particular, Wil-

liamson declares that "had there been peace in Europe their path might have been easier."

As there were those in the nation who thought Washington carried on with too much pomp and ceremony, so were there those in Thomaston who felt that Knox, living in baronial style as he did in the little primitive settlement, lorded it overmuch over the more humble settlers. Many were dissatisfied because of his lien on their land, and his wife was very unpopular. Dr. Dodge, who had preceded Knox to the town by a matter of five or six years, and was in fair a way to become its political leader, saw to it that Knox's influence did not go unchallenged. The measure of his success was shown in the election of 1801. While Knox was unanimously chosen to the state senate, the gubernatorial vote went to the Republican candidate. It is interesting to note in the light of the present day cleavage between the two parties, that the Republicans of that day were twitted with being Democrats—of all things!

Enthusiasm for Jefferson and his followers ran high for a time. The sea-faring people liked the way he handled the situation in the Mediterranean and heartily endorsed the paddling he gave the Barbary pirates. Although they could scarcely poke the prows of their vessels out of the mouth of the Georges because of the ban the warring British and French nations had put upon all ocean-going commerce, they remained loyal to the administration and its policy of friendship with France, their former ally. Not until the unfortunate embargo of 1807 did Jefferson's popularity wane. That act, which rang the death knell of American shipping, all but swept his local followers from their political moorings. But, because of the weight of Dr. Dodge's influence they did not drift so far away that they could not in 1808 elect two and in 1812 three candidates to the Great and General Court.

The storm not abating, the local Republicans might have abandoned their party ship altogether, but where could they go? The only other vessel in sight was that manned by the Federalists and that, too, was dragging its anchor. The only thing to do was to cling to their own rigging and wait for the gale to subside.

In the maritime realm, after a vessel has been buffeted by storm after storm it is not an uncommon practice to overhaul her



and to give her a fresh start by changing her name. That is exactly what happened to the Republican party. The storms of the embargo, the war and the depression had caused it to become so weather beaten that it needed a fresh coat of paint. In the process of applying that the old name *Republican* was painted out and *Democrat* was painted in. As in sea-faring ventures it takes more than a coat of paint and a change of name to work a miracle, so in politics a rechristening and a coat of whitewash were equally inadequate. The murk and fog of the depression were so thick that in 1814 when the Seaman's War was closing, not even the slogan "free-trade and sailor's rights" could rouse a cheer. The members of the crew of the local party decided to do a little "sogering" and leave the navigation of the *Ship of State* to their rival crews.

The attainment of the age majority by the state of Maine made not a ripple on the Georges after the question of the arrival and clearance of vessels at Boston was settled favorably to the local coasters. In fact, so prosperous was the administration of President Monroe that the flames of party spirit flickered and all but died down, only to be fanned into life again as the time drew near to elect his successor as well as members of the local school board and town assessors! So strong was the feeling engendered by the local contest that the parties could not even get together for a Fourth of July celebration and so staged two! Two orators, two parades, two banquets, n'everything.

Until 1825 both parties managed to get along without any party organ. In that year the first local newspaper, the *Thomaston Register* made its appearance. In the beginning it evinced an apparent freedom of party bias, then went Jacksonian under the guidance of Jonathan Cilley, who later became after many moves and counter moves, acknowledged head and leader of the Democratic party in the legislature of which branch he was elected the speaker. In seven short years the political stew boiled so vigorously that it splattered over everything and it became necessary to transfer some of it to another pot, an upstart paper called the *National Republican*. Two political papers in a town of about 4,000 population! Democratic opponents at that time were called Whigs.

In spite of all the charges and countercharges of the opposing parties, the state legislature by the middle thirties must have been considered, like Caesar's wife, to be above reproach, for in the state election of that year there was a concerted action to send a man to Augusta to reform him! He was a man "endowed with a graceful exterior, an easy address, a fine taste, keen feelings, a cultivated imagination, and a high relish for all the amenities of social life. But he lacked self control"—due it was thought to disappointment in love and loss of business. His friends sought to save him to himself and the community by placing upon his shoulder the duties and responsibilities of a seat in the state legislature. Whether or not that was the thing for want of which the battle was lost, it is hard to say. At any rate he failed of election and sinking deeper and deeper into the social scale ended his days in the poor house! All for the want of a vote. It would be interesting to know if his reform would have been accomplished had he won the coveted seat.

The good people of Maine have always prided themselves on their independence of thought. That that was questioned in some quarters is shown by an interesting piece in the *Eastern Argus* (Portland) for Dec. 17, 1838.

"Whenever the federal party finds itself defeated in any election campaign, it almost uniformly begins to talk about the ignorance of the people, and proposes some change in the qualifications of voters. The following extract from the *N. Orleans American*, a federal paper, furnishes an apt illustration of this fact:—'Maine is subject to British influence; Pennsylvania to the obstinacy of its German and Irish population, and Ohio to the ignorance of the Dutch, who have invaded whole sections of that glorious state. The masses in those states have gone to the polls, and we know the result—a result alike inimical to good Government as to the prosperity of classes. Until the right of suffrage is somewhat restricted, we shall ever see misrule in high places. As to whether that right will ever be restricted we have our doubts.' "

In the years between the War of 1812 and the Civil War the growing questions of tariff and slavery which were rocking the whole country, stirred political sentiment so profoundly that in



1854 there was established in Thomaston a newspaper entitled the Thomaston Journal. Its motto was "Neutral in nothing, independent on all subjects." That stand was all right, entirely acceptable to the townsfolk so long as the editor was on the side of free trade. When he began to show republican leanings over the question of slavery in Kansas that was a different story. Who cared about Kansas anyway? Out there the controversy was so hot that even the dumb animals were drawn into it by stigmatizing a horse a pro-slavery horse or a cow an anti-slavery cow, according to the beliefs of their owners; but why force the issue upon Thomaston? Her interests were wholly maritime. If Kansas had had a coastline and the controversy had been one of tariff or free trade then the question would have presented itself in a different light. As it was, Kansas was high and dry in the western wilderness. No Thomaston vessel had ever sailed there or ever could. Let Kansas get her own cat's tail out of the door. It was none of Thomaston's concern what happened to it. The Journal's patronage fell off, the paper literally folded up and its editor sought a hearing elsewhere.

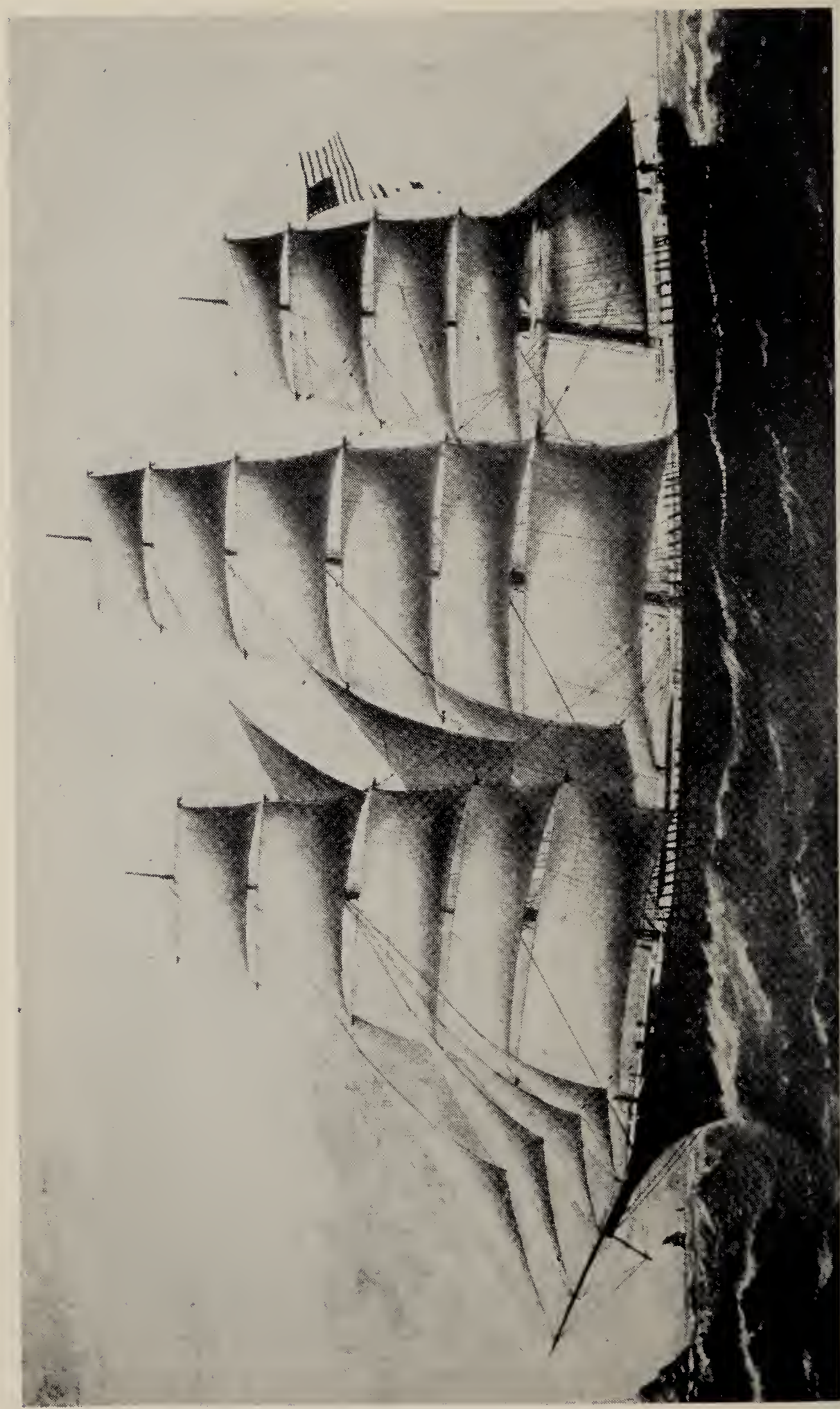
Thomastonians were congenitally free traders. Whichever party inscribed that slogan on its banner, then, that was the party for them. Consequently, so long as there was a demand for Thomaston ships and Thomaston men to man them the Democratic party was the logical party for the majority of its residents. The organization of the present Republican party in 1854-56 but strengthened their determined stand.

The writer's father was a Democrat. Her mother was a Democrat. All her relatives were Democrats. And she was a Democrat! She was with the majority and what a grand majority it was even including the family cat which was named "Free-trade." She has some recollection of arguments about "Green-backers," but it was generally acknowledged that they were a weak and powerless lot, while the Republicans, ah! the Republicans, especially the "black Republicans" were the rascals to watch. The author has since learned that in other communities, feeling ran in the opposite direction, so much so, that one timid little girl didn't dare to go to sleep for fear there might be a Democrat under the bed! Had the writer only known that little girl, she surely could have set the



Ship *Harvey Mills*, built at Thomaston in 1876, won a race from New York to San Francisco in 127 days.





The *Alfred D. Snow*, 1987 tons, built in Thomaston, Maine in 1877. From an oil painting by W. H. York, 1886.

tortured mind at rest, for the writer knew no one had cause to fear a Democrat. It was the rascally Republicans one had to look out for; they might crawl under a little girl's bed, but a democrat—never!

The years beginning with the election of Abraham Lincoln had been long, lean, dark and gloomy for the democratic party. Therefore in 1880 there was great rejoicing in the town over the election of Governor Harris M. Plaisted of Bangor, a Democrat. The state election coming in September and the national election not until November, the victors wisely decided to celebrate while the tide of victory was still running, as no one could tell what the outcome might be in November.

There was a torchlight parade accompanied by a mounted escort, two "cornet" bands, and the usual banners and transparencies with political mottoes. Along the line of march were displays of fireworks, colored lights, burning tar barrels, and brilliantly lighted dwellings. Governor Plaisted was there in person and made a speech. In the light of later events, the September celebration was timely.

In the presidential contest of 1884 feeling in the town again ran high—possibly because the Republican candidate, James G. Blaine, was a resident of Maine. At any rate the political rallies which began in September were heated and exciting. Possibly because Thomaston was such a hot bed of democracy many of the ablest speakers of both parties spoke from the platform in old Union Hall to crowded houses. Everybody went to Republican as well as Democratic rallies—not to be convinced, but just to listen, and to laugh at empty promises. One Republican speaker, in his harangue repeatedly harped on "the poor farmer" and his "*per-taters*." The writer's mother, a good mimic, remarked, "What can a republican who doesn't know any better than to say *per-taters* hope to tell democrats who always say potatoes?" Her vehement remark, "If *I* were a farmer I would *resent* it," made a deep impression on the writer and invariably comes to her mind whenever she hears that any vote-getter is out to champion the farmers' cause.

November came and with it the election. The early returns said the Democrats had won, that Cleveland and Hendricks were



elected! The Democrats in the town immediately fired a salute. No cannon being available, it was done in a very ingenious way. An iron ring to which a fuse was attached was laid between two anvils filled with powder and the fuse fired. The report gave vent to as much Democratic jubilation as a cannon could.

But, stay! Word came that the election was in doubt! for one whole week the town was dangling from the rigging. Then the glorious news came through that the Democrats *had* won!

Joy and enthusiasm knew no bounds. The chief Republican paper in the region was obliged to come down from its high horse and admit the jig was up—that Grover Cleveland's heavy bulk would warm the presidential chair, and to announce in rhyme:

“The end has come, the voter bold  
His final whoop has whooped;  
Pull in the flag, blow out the torch—  
We're scooped, alas! we're scooped!”

Having been justified in the first salute, the town then began a celebration that was to broadcast the victory in good earnest. Being the banner Democratic town of the state none had a better right to let go. It was decided to do things up red, with one of the biggest torchlight parades in the town's history. Bunting and flags began to appear everywhere. Dealers in tin horns and candles put on an extra force of clerks. Barrels of tar appeared as if by magic at the various street corners and at frequent intervals along the roads. Windows were washed, that no light might be dimmed, Japanese and Chinese lanterns and transparencies were brought forth. Trees and swaying clotheslines were festooned.

Dusk of the appointed day came. Delegations began to arrive from the surrounding towns, from Cushing, Friendship, St. George and Warren. Everyone could see the carriages and wagons, hear the toot of the locomotive whistles. The ecstasy of the great event lifted them almost from their feet.

At the writer's home all was bustle and excitement. Her mother commandeered all the lamps she could find, and those failing, she put candles on laths and illuminated every window from cellar to attic. Relatives began to arrive. Supper must be eaten, yet who cared about supper at such a time as that? More

relatives came. The barn was full of horses and the yard was full of carriages. What a nuisance! The duties of hospitality began to hold us up. At times it looked as if the family itself wouldn't have a chance to see the parade at all. Finally, all who were supposed to be coming had come and, with many misgivings, all the candles were extinguished, the lamps left burning, the key was turned in the door and we were off. Such extreme caution irked the children. Of course, everything was all right, of course the house wouldn't catch fire, of course all those horses wouldn't stamp through the barn floor. We could see the flare of torches, hear the roll of drums, and the clamor of the throng. We knew if mother didn't stop looking back we never would get away.

At last we reached the "Corner" and never again does the writer expect to experience greater thrills. Trainloads of people had come from the west, from Bath, Woolwich, Damariscotta, Wiscasset, Waldoboro, and Warren. Trainloads of people had come from the east from Rockland, Rockport, South Thomaston and Camden. Thomaston was mobbed! The procession formed for its triumphal march. Led by a band and drum corps, with torches spluttering, roman candles whizzing, and the crowd cheering, the parade marched up Knox Street to Main, up Main to the prison, down Wadsworth to Hyler, over Hyler to Gleason, down Gleason to Mill River, from Mill River, back up Main Street to Erin, up Erin to Beechwoods, and down Beechwoods to the head of Knox Street again. The entire line of march was illuminated with rockets, colored fires, and burning tar barrels. The marchers carried lighted torches and were vociferously cheered by the bystanders. Lorenzo Dow Carter, the venerable colored orator of South Warren, an enthusiastic Democrat, was one of the most noticeable features of the parade. With a flaming torch over his shoulder and a white beaver hat on his head, he dramatically stalked through the fireworks amid the cheers of the throng, as the parade made its final turn into Main Street. There, at the corner, where the stores were lavishly decorated with flags, bunting, and campaign banners, the final grand illumination, to the accompaniment of speeches, music, and cheers that rent the starry firmament, wound up the affair.

Reluctantly we children turned homeward. We would have



staid until the wick of the last swinging tin torch spluttered in its socket and until the echo of the last cheer had died away, but Mother was anxious about the lamps and the horses and at a time like that one never could tell *what* might happen.

The first thing that caught her eye when she reached the gate was the presence of a large, two-horse pleasure vehicle in the yard. That was not there when we went away. *Where* were the horses? Everything inside the house was undisturbed, nothing had caught fire and no burglars had forced an entrance. But, wait! Somebody started to go out into the barn, and couldn't. A horse was hitched to the wash-room door. Somebody had been in, in the barn anyway. Who was it?

Relatives began to return and were anxious to hitch up and get away, but none of them knew how to get into the barn to lead the horses out in their proper order. None of them knew who was responsible for the mix-up. Finally, the last of all to appear, were the real culprits. They had arrived late (one of their number was a niece of Father's), there was no place to put their span of horses; so they forced an entrance to the barn (of course Uncle David wouldn't care), shifted the horses about, put their two in, and went their way rejoicing. They had inconvenienced everybody, banged up a washboiler and ruined some bedding that had been tucked out there on the wood pile to be washed. After a heated argument apologies were made and the affair was smoothed over. One by one the teams drove out of the yard. Excited, but exhausted we sank to sleep—to dream of flaming torches, whizzing rockets, surging throngs, of horses all huddled in a heap in the barn, and of what a glorious thing it was to be a Democrat!

## *Maine Grows Up*

UNTIL MARCH 15, 1820, the "District of Maine" had been under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. Throughout the region there was much dissatisfaction over the relationship and repeated attempts were made to sever the ties, but Thomaston, because of her shipping interests, always voted "No," when the question was submitted to her. Zealous efforts and some chicanery, it is sad to relate, were used to win her over, but she was adamant. As matters stood it was possible for the many vessels plying between the Georges and Boston to come and go without let or hindrance. If Maine became a separate state, then every little coaster plying between Thomaston and Boston would be obliged to go through the formality of entering and clearing, and Thomaston would have none of it. Not until 1819 when Congress removed such restriction would she give in. Then, with her block of objections knocked out, preparations were speedily made for the launching of the Ship of State.

When all was in readiness for her to slide down the ways she met another blockage. Being in the North where slavery was not a recognized institution, if she were admitted to the union she would come in as a free state. That would never do because it would upset the existing national balance of eleven free and eleven slave states. The problem was solved by a compromise, the famous Missouri Compromise, whereby the State of Maine came in as a free, and Missouri as a slave state and the precious balance was maintained. The first duly elected governor of the state was the Honorable William King, a citizen of Bath, with fairly extensive business interests in Thomaston.

The example set by Maine in breaking away from her parent state was later followed by the subdivisions within it. Counties divided and subdivided. Towns did likewise. So many changes of



that nature took place that it became possible for a considerable number of persons to boast they had lived in two towns, two counties and two states without once changing their places of abode.

Independence or the attainment of majority always brings its responsibilities as Maine was soon to find out. When she left her parental home she had to get out bag and baggage. She had fourteen prisoners in the Charlestown prison and nowhere to put them, so one of her first concerns as a state was to provide a prison of her own where she could incarcerate her own delinquents. The state being a vast wilderness with a fringe of settlements along the coast and practically all of its communications by water, Thomaston was as logical a situation as any for the establishment of the new institution, and to the town it came. Possibly there was influence brought to bear upon those who made the selection, for the site purchased was Limestone Hill, the property of Governor King.

Granite from St. George was used in the construction of the building, the cells of which were underground! For twenty years the convicts, their day's work in the quarry over, were let down through trap doors to their damp, dark, foul-smelling quarters. Maine was not peculiarly harsh and inhumane in providing such unwholesome quarters, for Connecticut, whose laws were said to breathe a humane spirit, used the caverns of a copper mine for her state prison, the subterranean abodes for the worst offenders being about seventy feet under ground! Cells were erected above ground for the better type of convict and would you believe it those above ground quarters were not so healthful as those below ground? A geographer of the day, Elijah Parish, D.D. wrote, "The temperature is normal in these dismal dwellings, which are said to be remarkably healthy. While a contagious fever has proved fatal to several among the guards and convicts in the upper prison, those in the mines were all healthy." Since all prisons of that day were strictly penal institutions, Dr. Rose in charge of the construction of the Thomaston prison was providing a prison, not a hotel, and a prison he intended it should be. Certainly a limestone quarry was as healthful as a copper mine! The first inmates of the institution

were the fourteen convicts who were transferred from the Massachusetts state prison at Charlestown.

Since Maine had attained her majority during a season of national prosperity, everything went along very smoothly in Thomaston for the first few years after the separation. President Monroe's Atlantic seaboard policy appealed to its citizens and prospered its chief industry, shipbuilding. Notwithstanding that fact, as soon as his second term was nearing a close the flames of party spirit began to flare up and at the town meeting in March, 1823, the town went Democratic. Evidently there was a robust minority, for, when the 4th of July rolled round there were two celebrations—one by the Republicans and one by the Democrats. The absurdity of two celebrations was commented upon by Mrs. Swan, daughter of Gen. Knox, in a letter to a friend: "We had quite a brilliant celebration here on the Fourth, I assure you. The division of parties in such a village as this is doubtlessly a ridiculous affair. It could not be termed a political division as we had many of the most respectable *Democrats* on our side . . . Mr. Ingraham who made the prayer looked like a perfect beauty . . . the Declaration of Independence was read in a prodigiously fine style . . ." The toast by Col. Healey, one of the Democrats, 'Party spirit';—its fires having been securely raked up, may whoever attempts to open them again, burn his own fingers!"

Slight changes in the mode of living began to appear at this time. Wood was becoming scarce. The cavernous fireplaces with their insatiable demand for wood were giving way to cook-stoves, to air-tights, and to furnaces. Coal was being imported, and lucifer matches, one of the greatest innovations of the day, outmoded the tinder box and made it unnecessary to run to the neighbors to borrow fire if one's own coals died out. Those little gadgets were the forerunners of the loco-focos which a few years later were so dramatically used to relight candles that had been provocatively extinguished during a Democratic meeting in New York city. Because of that incident for a time the Democrats in Thomaston as elsewhere were nicknamed Locofocos.

In 1824 the banks of the Georges for the first time resounded to reverberations from the toot of a steamer whistle. A saucy



steamer named the *Maine* bustled right up to one of the wharves, openly courted the admiration of Thomaston's sail worshipers and impudently carried a crowd across the Bay to witness the launching of a brig at Mill River. After dallying around the river for a week she departed, having made no converts to the belief in the superiority of steam over sail.

Perhaps one of the most significant manifestations of the stability and progress of the times was the establishment of a bank in Thomaston in 1825. It was known as the Thomaston Bank and was the first in the vicinity. As a symbol of outward and inward strength it was housed in a granite building and numbered among its directors some of the town's most influential men.

The local plutocrats had become so prosperous that they had more money than they could employ profitably. Those not quite so plutocratic had for some time been borrowing money in Damariscotta at twelve per cent, or transacting business on credit, a procedure that worked hardship all along the line from the farmer and the farm hand to the shipbuilder and shipowner. Laborers were compelled to trade at the company stores and farmers had to take store pay. The establishment of a bank which could issue its own bills was a much needed institution. It is interesting to note the self reliance of the citizens of the community. If they needed vessels they built them, if they needed sailors they raised them, if they needed a fire or marine insurance company they organized and financed it, if they needed a bank they established one! There was little call for help from outside. The town abounded with men of integrity and ability who could manage anything from a farm to a frigate or a financial institution.

The business, commenced with caution and managed with success, was earning the confidence of the investing public when a most unfortunate thing occurred. The bank with a capital of \$50,000 was robbed of \$12,000 in what appeared to be an inside job. Only the cashier and the president had access to the vaults. In spite of their protestations of innocence the finger of suspicion pointed steadily at them until it was learned that large numbers of Thomaston bills were being deposited in a bank in Dover,

New Hampshire, by a man who had formerly lived in the town.

Notwithstanding the declaration in the Bill of Rights that a person cannot be tried twice for the same offence the offender was tried twice for the crime, first in Maine, and, when more evidence was found, in New Hampshire. At both trials his guilt was established beyond the question of a doubt, yet both times he was given his freedom. At the first trial, which was held in Warren, he was acquitted. Soon after his acquittal a bunch of false keys imbedded in a ball of putty was found near a brook in the town. Armed with the new evidence, the bank reopened the case in the New Hampshire courts. At the second trial the jury could not agree and released the defendant on condition that he reimburse the bank to the amount of \$2,000! Like a verdict of "Not guilty, but don't do it again." Dividends were withheld for a time to make up the loss. With confidence restored the bank became so prosperous that according to the bank commissioner's report "It now pays a dividend of 10% and discount day is Monday." Lest my readers rush to invest, may I add that the date of the report is 1862.

With so much going on in the town and with so many worldwide contacts, the need of some sort of a news sheet was apparent. As in the case of the bank there was sufficient local initiative to start a paper, and the Thomaston Register was born in 1825. A file of the earliest issues is still in existence. The paper was ably edited, well printed, and altogether a credit to the town and its publishers. It is interesting to note when scanning its columns how few were the strictly local news items. There was local advertising, but none of the personal chit-chat so prominent in present day newspapers. Most of the items had to do with the government, with foreign countries, or with subjects of moral or spiritual uplift. There were occasional paragraphs of an amusing nature, such as: "A New England captain subscribed his name at the Marshal's office: 'Through—Much—Tribulation—We—Enter—Into—The—Kingdom—Of—Heaven Clap,' and remarked that his mother called him 'Tribby' for short."

Two local items of interest were, first, an account of an attempt to break into the prison to steal two casks of powder. The



thief made a successful entry, got one cask out, and was going back for the second, when he was challenged by the guard, whereupon he dropped his loot and took to his heels. A second item was of human interest and perhaps reveals the inherent suspicion latent in all of us regarding the stranger within our gates. A family consisting of a man, wife, and small child had strolled into the town. The frail wife was much younger than her husband, very girlish in appearance, and the child was puny and sickly. Everybody kept a strict watch of all the family's doings, for "blacklegs and stragglers" or anybody likely to become a pauper was not allowed to loiter in the town. Instead, he was given a walking ticket, locally referred to as being "warned out of town." The family in question was eyed with great suspicion, partly because of the great difference in the ages of the man and woman and partly because they had no visible means of support. However, before the authorities got around to taking any action the mother up and died and the father deserted the baby. Such a cowardly act left no doubt in anybody's mind as to the father's villainy. The Register thus freely spoke its mind: "He was a dark-complected man with keen black eyes. We would take him to be of that class of men who have no home, nor country, nor friends and are generally characterized as *gamblers!*"

A Halifax, North Carolina paper was quoted as carrying an advertisement for a runaway slave aged about 90 years. A reward of \$50 was offered for his return alive or \$100 for his head. The editorial comment was, "Hope such men are rare. We would certainly rather possess the head of the slave than the heart of the master."

The reward for the slave, dead or alive, was munificent compared with the reward offered for the return of a runaway apprentice. The advertisement read:

#### "One Cent Reward

Absconded from the service of the Subscriber on Thursday last, the 15th inst, Augustine Drake, an indentured servant apprentice to the blacksmith business, about 17 years old, about common height for his age, and rather slender; whoever will return said apprentice to his master shall receive the above reward; and all persons are hereby forbid harboring or trusting said apprentice on

account of subscriber, as they would avoid penalties of the law, and no debts of his contracting will be paid by the subscriber.

“Abner Rice

“Thomaston, June 17, 1825.”

Whether the truant was returned and the reward claimed tradition does not say, but some years later there was a blacksmith in the town who bore the name of the absconding apprentice.

One interesting write-up gave a detailed account of Lafayette's reception in Portland. The famous general had a doubly-warm place in the hearts of Thomaston citizens; first, because of the outstanding part he played in the liberation of our country and, second, because he had been Gen. Knox's comrade-in-arms and a close personal friend of the family. On the top of an arch under which the parade passed an American eagle was perched. At the approach of the illustrious guest the eagle raised himself majestically and flapped his wings. Henry W. Longfellow, whose grandfather had once lived in Thomaston, made the welcoming speech. The Hon. Ruggles of Thomaston, speaker of the House of Representatives, extended the distinguished guest an invitation from the town of Thomaston to pay it a visit.

Had Gen. Knox or even Madam Knox been living doubtless Thomaston would have been able to add another great name to its list of notable guests. Neither the General nor his lady being alive to press a personal invitation, the town's invitation was politely declined. As matters stood with Knox's family perhaps it was just as well that Lafayette could not come. Of the proposed visit it was said, “Had Mrs. Knox been living in the affluence of her former days, nothing could have afforded her greater pleasure than a visit from her old acquaintance, the companion and friend of her husband and of Washington; but had not death supervened, her own circumstances and those of her family—the noble mansion in decay and the marks of dilapidated fortunes but too apparent on all about it—render it too probable that she would have felt mortification rather than pleasure, and have said in her heart what her son Henry (Lafayette's godson) did not hesitate to express, ‘I have no wish to see him.’ ”



For want of accredited law schools it was the custom of the day and for many a day thereafter for law students to read law under the tutelage of an established lawyer. John Ruggles, a graduate of Brown University, who had read law with Gov. Levi Lincoln at Worcester, Massachusetts, opened an office in Thomaston in 1818. Among the many who came to his office to prepare for the legal profession was a young Bowdoin graduate, Jonathan Cilley, friend and classmate of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The day after his graduation, Cilley, "taking a seat in the chaise of H. Prince, Jr.," traveled to Thomaston to embark upon his chosen career. He later married Prince's sister and made his home in Thomaston. Befitting his talents and his training he took an active interest in local and state affairs and whenever called upon to deliver an oration gladly gave his services. Not without much squabbling, back-biting, and political animus on the part of his rivals, Cilley, a Democrat, was elected to the Maine House of Representatives for five consecutive years. That triumph was followed by the great honor of being chosen a representative to Congress in 1837 where his talents, energy, and independence might find a more extended field of action. So actively did the political pot boil that a second weekly newspaper, the National Republican had to be established to adequately handle the political issues involved. Mighty stews can boil in very tiny pots.

Representative Cilley took his congressional duties seriously, and soon distinguished himself for his integrity and fearlessness, qualities which brought him to a catastrophic end, death by a duel!

It happened thus. An anonymous writer in a New York paper had brought charges of corruption against a member of Congress. A fellow member from Virginia proposed an investigation which Cilley opposed as unnecessary, saying the charge was loose, indefinite, and without the name of the author; but unfortunately he added a bit of venom when he suggested that the editor of the paper which carried the slur, because of certain transactions with the United States bank, should be the last to bring charges of corruption.

A man can stand almost anything but being called a liar or a thief. The editor immediately loosened his stock, rolled up his

sleeves and sent a challenge to Cilley to name his weapons and fight it out. The challenge being sent through a member from Kentucky, Cilley at first refused to accept it. That was construed as a reflection upon the integrity and honor of the go-between, who then chose a second to make a challenge in his behalf. The second challenge Cilley accepted, saying "the pretext of the challenge is absurd. I understand the conspiracy to destroy me as a public man. But New England must not be trampled on; and I go to this field sustained by as high a motive of patriotism as ever led my grandfather or my brother to battle, as an unhappy duty, not to be shrunk from, to my honor, my principles, and my country."

The seconds arranged all the details, provided the rifles, Cilley's choice of weapons, and arranged for the attendance of a surgeon whereupon all repaired to a field near Anacosta bridge in Washington. Positions, at a fixed distance of eighty yards, were chosen by lot as was the man who should give the order to fire which fell to Cilley's second. After the first and again after the second shots were exchanged, Cilley was given a chance to retract. He refused. With the third discharge Cilley fell, pierced through the heart! The unfortunate affair created a great stir around the nation and was followed by severe protests against the continuance in this country of so useless and barbarous a means of settling a dispute as was the duel.

Memorial services were held in Thomaston. One of the speakers, an avowed political opponent and professional rival, William J. Farley declared: "amid all the bitterness of party strife, in all the warmth of professional controversy, our personal friendship was never for a moment interrupted." After a scathing rebuke to the seconds and others who arranged the affair the speaker added, "If at night they sleep, I do not envy them their dreams!"

Nathaniel Hawthorne, college classmate and friend, who had visited Cilley in his home at Thomaston, described him as having "an impending brow, deep-set eyes, and a thin thoughtful countenance, which in abstracted moments seemed almost stern; but in the intercourse of society, it was brightened by a smile that will live in the recollection of all who knew him . . . gentle and amiable in the precincts of his family . . . simple and prim-



itive . . . It made me smile, though with anything but scorn . . . to see him driving home his cow after a long search for her through the village . . . Who could have believed that, with his thoroughly New England character, in so short a time after I had seen him in that peaceful happy home, among those simple occupations and pure enjoyments, he would be stretched in his own blood—slain for an almost impalpable punctilio!”

As an indication of the world-mindedness of the town it may be noted in passing that at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our national independence Simon Bolivar’s name was linked with that of Washington, Knox and other patriots! Bolivar’s struggles for South American independence so closely paralleled Washington’s that he is often spoken of as the “Washington of South America.” Evidently Thomastonians thought of him as a brother patriot, for in the decorations of the old Church on the Hill in that year, 1825, his name outlined in red roses stood as a living symbol among those of our own dead patriots whose names were traced in white.

A few years later when the Greeks were fighting to free themselves from Turkish bondage the sympathies of the townspeople were aroused. Unlike Lord Byron they did not rush tempestuously to aid, but on Fast Day listened to an ovation in their behalf and sent them a contribution of fifty-three dollars.

What better proof could one ask concerning the prosperity of the town than that shown by the revival of the Thomaston Coal and Mineral Company in 1832? Those interested must have had quite a bit of loose change burning holes in their pockets to even dream of financing such a venture. To be sure it did begin on a loose change basis. The first block of stock sold for twenty-five cents a share. It soon rose to seven dollars. Borings were made from the bottom of an old twenty-foot shaft. The deeper the boring, the greater the interest despite the fact that no coal was struck. Even Mr. Bussey of Boston, who gave the Bussey Institute to Harvard, contributed \$100 for the furtherance of the project. In order to go deeper and deeper with smaller and smaller drills more money was needed. It was decided to finance further operations from a sale of stock to be offered at \$20! What more could one ask of an investment than that

it increase 8000% in value? But even that price could not lure the much sought mineral from its hiding place and the Coal and Mineral Company went on the rocks.

One of the most amazing things in the financial history of these United States is the fact that when President Monroe handed over the reins of government to Andrew Jackson there was actually a surplus in the national treasury! More surprising yet was the fact that the government officials did not know what to do with it. Reasoning that the government is the people and that what belongs to the government belongs to them, it was decided since not every one in the nation had two chickens in every pot and two horses in every stall that the fairest thing to do was to make a per capita division of the surplus. "W'ich," as Benny Potts would have said, "they did." Thomaston's share amounted to \$10,544 and Warren's to \$4,266. A local contemporary had this to say of the distribution and its effects as he saw it: "The amount of revenue thus received by the town (Thomaston) in several installments . . . was \$10,544; and the shares thus distributed in this time of general distress and stagnation of business, afforded a very acceptable relief to many poor families. In Warren, the first installment was used for primary schools and thriftily loaned out to individuals. Some of the citizens, however, disrelished this application of its use and by a large majority voted for its impartial division. The good folk of Warren did what the average person does when he gets an unexpected windfall: they spent it. Thus a fund, which, if wisely improved by the States for purposes of education and internal improvement, might have adorned and blessed the country for ages, was, so far as Warren's share was concerned, dissipated at once, affording indeed a transient delight to the poor and destitute, but lost to the rich like a drop in the bucket and seen no more."

History has a way of repeating itself and so, my Optimistic Reader, instead of concentrating on taxes, put on your thinking cap and figure out how you will spend your share of the next division of surplus revenue.

Whenever there was a controversy going on anywhere in the world, Thomaston, because of the seafaring life of its inhabit-



ants, found it was practically impossible not to be drawn into it. Maine had come into the Union as a *free* state and as such was supposed to have no slave question. She did not of her own, but it was impossible for wideawake and much-travelled folk like the citizens of Thomaston not to be aware of the problem and to have definite ideas one way or the other as to the right and justice of the institution of slavery.

Right or wrong, the question unfortunately touched the nerve to their pocketbooks. Thomaston's paramount interests were maritime. Her shipowners and captains picked up cargoes where they could get them. The southern plantations of cotton, sugar and tobacco were a great storehouse whose wares they were distributing all over the world. It was decidedly to Thomaston's interests to have those plantations maintained, and if it could be done profitably only by slavery, well, that was the planter's responsibility.

Then, too, the social contacts made it almost impossible for Thomastonians to maintain an unbiased opinion of the situation. The shipowners and captains viewed the system from its rosy side—that of the planter. Many plantations had their own docks where vessels lay while loading and the captains and their families were recipients of lavish and warm-hearted southern hospitality. It was hard to believe the courtly southern gentlemen and their gracious, hospitable wives were cruel, hard-hearted slave drivers. They might be stern. The hustling Yankees could see the need for that while fretting and fuming over the exasperating indolence of the darkies as they helped to load or unload vessels tugging at their ropes to get away. To be frank, the average sea-cap'n had much in common with the slave master. Like him he was often a hard driver. About the only difference in the underlings beneath them was the difference in the term of servitude. The question that was the crux of the whole matter, the right of one human being to buy and sell another, was Levitically side-stepped. That was a question for the Southerner to settle with his conscience and his God.

It was common knowledge in Thomaston that Bostonians were getting in so bad in the South that the Georgia legislature had put a price of \$5,000 on the head of William Lloyd Garrison,

the abolitionist leader. Some local people interpreted his campaign as not only unwarranted interference in another's affairs, but downright disloyalty to New England and her great shipping interests, and privately said they thought it served him right when he was mobbed and dragged through the city streets. When a meeting of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society was broken up by a mob that, too, was partially condoned. If the females had been home where they belonged tending their babies and their kitchens nobody would have molested them. Those things were happening in Boston. Thomaston was soon to learn, however, that it makes a difference whose cat's tail is in the door.

In 1837, the schooner *Boston* of which Edward Kelloran was mate, was in southern waters. Before making her homeward passage she hauled up in Savannah for repairs. One of the workmen employed was a slave named Atticus, the property of the contractor. He was evidently doing a good job, for the sailors gave him to understand that for a person with his trade there were many opportunities in the North. Whether or not there was any connivance on the part of the sailors will never be known, but when the schooner was several days out the captain found not only a stowaway to handle but a fugitive slave to answer for. How strange it is that when a movement, a race, or a religion is simmered down to the individual, our attitude toward it changes! Good folk and true who would not lift a finger for the abolition of slavery would nevertheless shield and protect a runaway slave. When the vessel arrived home no attempt was made to put Atticus in custody or to return him to his master. In fact, for a time, he was given employment on Mr. Kelloran's farm, then in Cushing, now in Thomaston. Soon his master came in hot pursuit. A warrant was issued for the slave's arrest, but he could not be found. Later a reward of \$20 was offered for his delivery to his master. It is believed that two men, posing as friends, chose a place of concealment for him and then betrayed him to his owner, who triumphantly put him aboard a schooner at East Thomaston, and carried him back to a servitude which must have seemed doubly severe after his taste of freedom.

One would have thought that the matter would have ended there but, no, the Governor of Georgia demanded the Governor



of Maine give up the captain and mate of the schooner *Boston* as criminals for trial in that state. The governor refused, as did the two succeeding governors, to the persistent request for the extradition of the men. Stirred by the inability of their governor to exact satisfaction from the governor of Maine, the Georgia legislature passed a bill calling for the quarantining of all vessels from or belonging to the State of Maine. The bill was vetoed and the matter dropped. A local paper of the day ridiculed the bill saying: "If it had passed any vessel violating the law was to be indicted and, if convicted, imprisoned in the penitentiary at hard labor. What kind of cells must they have in the Georgia penitentiary to receive a ship of five hundred tons. And to what kind of hard labor would they put a ship if convicted?"

The next two decades, the Fabulous Forties and the steady-going Fifties were days of frenzied shipbuilding, when one glorious clipper after another was sliding down the ways, not only in Thomaston, but along the whole northern Atlantic seaboard. The story of the part that Thomaston played in the national drama of those years is told in the chapters on ships and shipbuilding.

## *“Business on Great Waters”*

THE FIRST RECORDED voyage on the Georges was in 1605 up the river from its mouth to the head of tide waters, to what is now Warren. When the tide turned in later years there was a steady stream of vessels down the river.

Taking the abundant timber right at hand local skilled artisans fashioned hulls and rounded spars into sloops, brigs, barques, and barkentines—schooners and ships of such beauty and responsiveness that they seemed to breathe the very breath of life. Manned by the town's daring men and boys, one by one they sailed down the river and out to sea leaving behind a streaming wake which encircled the whole wide world. Wherever there was an open port, wherever there was need of a cargo Thomaston built vessels were known. Majestically sailing hither and yon they carried anything and everything that could be put into a ship's hold, and wherever there was a cargo waiting for shipment there was a Thomaston vessel with open hatches to receive it. They sailed to the British Isles, to Germany, Holland, France, Spain, Russia, the Mediterranean, Africa, South America, the West Indies, the East Indies, China, Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and the western ports of our own country. They brought guano from Callao, nitrates from Chile, logwood from Tampico, ship's spars from Oregon, sugar and molasses from the West Indies and South America, coffee from Brazil, wool and hides from Argentina and Australia, asphalt from Trinidad, salt from Turks Island, Spain and Sicily; they carried ice to southern ports; cotton, lumber, grain, and oil to Europe and coal from one end of the earth to the other. One of Joshua Morton's vessels is said to have been the first ship to carry a cargo of kerosene across the Atlantic.

In the early periods of discovery, the discoverers, although they



were really looking for gold, spices, and precious stones, did not disdain to take anything that they could lay hands on if the article had a known market value anywhere. As we have already noted there was a great demand in the Mother Country for masts for vessels. Trees suitable for masts were standing so thick all along the banks of the Georges that obviously nature intended them for that very purpose. Consequently masts were among the first cargoes to be carried directly from the Georges to England.

The waters of the river abounded with fish. When Weymouth and his men rowed up stream that memorable day in June, 1605, "fish, some great, . . . judged to be salmon were leaping above water—perhaps overcome with joy at the coming of the white man. Besides salmon, there were shad, bass, cunners, tomcods, and in season "elwives" (alewives) and smelts. As all the world was hungry, calling for food and more food, fish, too, early became an important article of export. So large a part did the exportation of fish play in the commerce of colonial days it has been said that "New England commerce smelled more strongly of fish than New England theology did of brimstone," a strong statement with a fishy sound, but true. The fish, always dried and corned (salted) were not needed in England for she had her own "'erring" and bloaters, but there was a great demand for them in the Catholic countries bordering the Mediterranean, in the other American colonies, in the Canary and Madeira Islands, and in the West Indies. The fish, graded as to quality, were marketed on that basis. As is the custom of marketing folk, generally the best grades were sold. The fastidious Mediterranean countries bought the best, the second best were eaten at home or sold to the other colonies or the West Indies, where there was also a demand for the poorest quality for feeding the slaves. In recent years the town of Warren, formerly the Upper Town, made contracts with a Haitian firm to buy all the surplus alewives taken at the weirs in that town. The fish are smoked before being shipped to the tropics. Incredible as it seems now, whole cargoes of oysters were shipped from the Georges, too. They were usually sold in the other New England seaport settlements.

Although mention is made in the early records of whaleboats being in the possession of the early settlers on the river, no men-

tion is made of their use for whaling. So far as the writer knows Capt. Bert Williams was the only Thomaston captain to go on whaling voyages. He followed that branch of the calling in the northern Pacific in later years.

Furs, though not so readily available as masts and fish, rated high in both quantity and value as desirable cargoes. All the earliest fur cargoes were secured through barter with the Indians. It was not until the settlements became definitely under the protection of the Crown that it was possible for white hunters and trappers to go into the depths of the forest to take the coats right off the backs of its helpless denizens. For just about a full century the bulk of all the Georges River traffic was in masts, fish and furs.

With the coming of the Scotch-Irish settlers and the clearing of the land in 1736 cargoes began to vary somewhat. Instead of masts exclusively, cordwood and finished lumber either in the form of deal, clapboards or barrel staves was exported. Secondary products, such as bark, potash, pearl ash, tar and pitch had a definite commercial value and also brought very satisfactory returns.

There was a great demand for both cordwood and staves and Waldo had agreed to take all that could be produced. Cordwood, the only fuel of the times, found a ready sale in Boston, Salem, and other ports. Whether one lived in a hut or a mansion the home fires could be kept burning only by constant replenishment. A home was not a home without at least one fireplace in which all the family cooking was done, the water for washing and other purposes heated, and around which the entire family gathered for warmth. Little wonder that the word “hearth” became a synonym for “home.” In the homes of the well-to-do where there was a fireplace in every room, one servant out of the many employed was usually assigned the sole duty of attending to the fireplaces, and it was a full time job. The kitchen fireplace whether in the house of rich or poor was a huge affair built to accommodate four-foot logs—and the rate of consumption was prodigious. In the homes of humble folk it was the boys’ chore to bring in the wood. In his immortal poem *Snow Bound*, Whittier says,



“We piled, with care, our nightly stack  
Of wood against the chimney-back;  
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
And on its top the stout back-stick;  
The knotty fore-stick laid apart,  
And filled between with curious art  
The ragged brush.”

Multiply that picture by three-hundred and sixty-five, for every day in the year and the result by thousands for every home in the land and one will get an idea of the enormous amount of firewood consumed in the New England colonies alone. There was a demand for Maine firewood as far away as Buenos Aires!

Although wood brought only 58¢ a cord at the shore and would buy little more than a pound of tea at 42¢, or a bushel of corn at 50¢, the settlers tackled the job of getting it out with all their pioneering zeal. One would hardly consider the manufacture of cordwood a feminine accomplishment, yet “Great Mary” over at Broad Bay, not to be outdone by the men, hauled out on a handsled two sloop loads of wood in one winter.

The West Indies and Canary Islands were calling for staves. At that time practically everything that was transported was packed in barrels or kegs, not only wine, rum, and molasses; but fish, meat, flour, furs, hides, lime, whale-oil and the thousand and one things the colonists needed. All called for barrels made of strong, well-fitting staves which could be made out of the smaller growth of timber left after the King had had his pick for his masts. The manufacture of staves was an occupation the pioneers could carry on under cover if necessary, in comparative safety from lurking savages. The staves, too, could be kept in a safe place. Best of all, though, was the returns from the workman’s labor. If, as was estimated, one man could make 15,000 barrel staves a year worth £4 a thousand in the colonies and £20 in the Canaries he could earn a fairly comfortable annual income for those times. Oak was used chiefly in the manufacture of staves. It could be made especially water tight, and would stand the stress and strain of the crude transportation facilities of the time.

Bark, potash, and naval stores were also desirable cargoes, as good as gold for the purchase of foodstuffs and other necessary supplies. Hemlock bark, removed from the trees when they were

converted into lumber, was used for tanning leather and was in great demand in the other colonies and in England. With unbounded confidence in its salability, about 1760, Hugh McLean, later proprietor of the newly built saw-mill at the Crick and in his day the most important trader on the river, loaded his sloop with ground hemlock bark and sailed for England. Arrived there, the port authorities asked, "To whom are you consigned?" "To nobody," was the surprising answer. "Who are your owners?" To which McLean proudly answered, "I am my own owner—cargo and vessel." He did not ask for his clearance papers until the last bushel of bark was sold and the hold, scraped clean, was filled with English goods to sell to the folk back home.

After the standing timber was cut, stripped of its bark, and converted into lumber there were the stumps staring the pioneer in the face. One of the accepted definitions of "stump" is, "to bring to a halt by means of obstacles, as if acting like a stump in the way." The early settlers were hungry for a harvest and never let so trivial a matter as a tree butt "stump" them. Those hindrances to the cultivation of the soil had to be removed, and removed they were. The hardwood stumps such as beech, birch and oak were burned, the ashes collected and leached to make potash and further refined to make pearl ash and, lo! there were two more products to be converted into money or exchanged for provisions. Both potash and pearl ash were in great demand in England where they were used in the bleaching of cloth and in the manufacture of soap. For a time they were both on the list of colonial products that were requisitioned by the Mother Country. How like a stern parent she was! The stumps and branches of the soft woods, the pines, spruces, and the firs were converted into naval stores by boiling in rude kilns. Burning would have destroyed the pitch.

In this land of the pointed fir one of the first things that attracted Weymouth and his men was the "gum, which congealed on the outside of the bark of the trees, and which smelled like frankincense." Although the gum did not turn out to be frankincense, it did prove to be the pitch in the tar, pitch and turpentine class. As such it was far more valuable to the colonists and to England than frankincense could possibly have been. As



the Indians had learned before the settlers came, it was an excellent material for waterproofing the seams of vessels. So eager was England to secure the product for the use of her navy, that a bounty of £4 a ton was paid for its delivery. Quantities of it were also used in the shipyards of this country.

When the land was once cleared that source of income was lost to the settlers on the Georges and elsewhere in New England. The Carolinas then took up the production, which they could carry on by means of tapping the pitch pine trees, not by their complete and immediate destruction. As there were not enough sloops on the Georges to carry all the commodities produced, many vessels came from the settlements in southern New England laden with cargoes of foodstuffs to exchange for the products of the Georges.

Mother Nature having left an outcropping of limestone on the left bank of the river near the Narrows, the early proprietors immediately tested it, and, finding it produced an excellent grade of lime, opened a quarry, built a kiln, and began burning lime in considerable quantities for the Boston market. That industry was begun as early as 1733, several years before the coming of the Scotch-Irish settlers. The first shipments of lime were made in used molasses hogsheads—locally pronounced “hogsets.” From that year until our own day, in which substitutes have all but driven lime from the market, a steady stream of heavily laden lime-coasters have nosed their way to the ports along our whole Atlantic seaboard. Ships, too proud to be “coasters,” often carried lime in ballast to New Orleans or other southern ports, there to load cotton for the European market.

Our friend, Hugh McLean, was the outstanding trader on the river during pre-Revolutionary days. It was he who so confidently carried the cargo of bark to England, and who so clearly demonstrated that a stout heart backed up by perseverance can turn a bear market into a bull market almost any day. By birth he was Scotch-Irish, possessing all the canniness and thrift of that admirable race. It is said he was a jovial, genial person, polite withal, and one given to the observance of the little amenities of life. His laden coasters plying between the Georges and Boston were popular passenger liners also. The sleeping accommodations

on the sloops were so sketchy that sleep was out of the question. To compensate for that lack the passengers amiably turned the voyage into a revel with their genial host as leader. It must have taken revelry of a high order to make up for a week's loss of sleep, for if the sloop encountered head winds a voyage of that length was common.

The story is told that on one trip a jolly young Irishman, complaining of the hardness of the times and the lack of opportunity for even an ambitious youth like himself, was taken up by McLean and promised an all-time job if he would sign indentures for the rest of his life. Unexpectedly confronted with the paper for his signature, he begged to be given time to think it over. By the following morning his Hibernian wit came to the rescue. He said that in the night while carefully weighing the merits of the case the voice of his "*ould*" father back in Ireland had come to him saying, "Dinny, never put your name to anything in black and white," adding, "Now, just make the writings all black or all white, and I am ready to sign them." Had the young man signed on the dotted line he would have been legally obligated, for such contracts were the cornerstone of much of the employment of that day.

The foregoing incident may have been, probably was, just a practical joke. But when McLean wanted help and needed it in a hurry he had found a way to secure it without resorting to indentures or to jokes. If he wanted his sloop loaded and towed down the river at short notice all he had to do was to open the spigot in a barrel of rum and treat liberally. Young men, ready for a frolic, pitched in and sparing neither themselves nor the rum often loaded and towed the vessel down-river in a day. The towboats of that day were large, open rowboats manned by several hands. Whenever the towline broke or got snarled the young men scrambled aboard for "just one more" which tradition says they were not "slack" in doing.

If times were dull there was always possibility of a profitable voyage to the West Indies. A crafty salesman could sell almost anything there. Lord Timothy Dexter's captain had proven that. Finding a part of his consignment to be warming pans, he removed the covers, put on handles and sold them to the sugar



planters for strainers and the pan part for ladles. This kitchenware was hailed as a great invention and was in great demand. So, in the winter season when the *Georges* was likely to be frozen over, McLean usually made trips to the West Indies. He carried cargoes of staves which he exchanged for West India goods. A common business sign of the day read, "W. I. Goods Sold Here." McLean set up several young men in that line, supplying the goods and sharing the profits. The fore-handed people of the region went in their own sloops to Boston and bought their West India goods there; the not so thrifty evidently bought theirs of McLean or his proteges. He was seemingly an easy creditor, leading the indigent debtors to believe they were trading wholly in futures; but when difficulties or death brought the transactions to a crisis, then the hapless victim or his heirs realized to the full the strength of McLean's hold upon them.

By these methods, both above board and below, he became a wealthy man, in the same class with his contemporary, Capt. John North, who was rated as "one of the magnates with whom in these early times every settlement of importance on this eastern coast was generally favored." McLean's wife came to the region intending to establish a home, but could not bring herself to stay in so primitive a spot and returned to Milton, Massachusetts, where she had been brought up. John McLean, only son, and heir to the McLean fortune, died without issue in 1823. He bequeathed \$25,000 to Harvard College, \$25,000 to the Massachusetts General Hospital, and over \$100,000 for the establishment of a branch hospital which bears his name, the McLean Hospital for mental patients, at Waverly, Massachusetts. The "handsome fortune" that made these legacies possible represented the difference in the value of staves at £4 a thousand on the *Georges* and £20 a thousand in the West Indies.

Next to dominate the stage in the business life of the region with "quarter-deck efficiency" was Col. Mason Wheaton. He burned lime, operated a saw mill, and ran a coasting business to distribute the products of his quarries and mill. He was an organizer as well as a business man and to his leadership and initiative the incorporation of the town is accredited. The span of his business career, covering the trying Revolutionary times

as it did, was really a great tribute to his ability as a resourceful man of affairs.

So harassed were the ship masters and ship builders during the long Revolutionary struggle that maritime ventures of all kinds were practically paralyzed. Not even the lowliest woodboat was safe on the high seas. The inhabitants of every inlet and cove lived in constant terror of attack by the British and their Tory allies. In *Meduncook*, now Friendship, six vessels were destroyed at one time.

As a leader in the committee of Safety and Correspondence Wheaton was largely responsible for what little coasting was done on the river during those trying years. The sloops *Sally Three Friends* were chartered for Ipswich, Wheaton's sloop to Portsmouth, a fourth licensed to go fishing and a fifth to be held in custody. The British, either because of pressure or as a favor to Tory Friends in Boston, occasionally winked at infractions of the blockade, and now and then openly gave a “*Lett pass*” certificate to the master of a sloop. Capt. Watson of the *Georges*, master of the *Sally* laden with “Thirty Cords Wood” was cleared by the Salem Custom House, “the 14th of Dec. 1774, and in the 15th year of His Majesty's Reign . . . bound for the Town or Harbour of Boston.” The dauntless *Sally* and four or five other sloops managed to sail in defiance of the embargo until 1778. An occasional vessel from the South Shore of Massachusetts also managed to slip through the blockade and run into the *Georges* for much needed supplies. From first to last the whole period was an exasperating one, imposing dire hardships not only on the soldiers and sailors immediately involved, but on every civilian regardless of his occupation or his station in life. The seafaring man was the hardest hit of all the civilian population and had not the high seas been the only available high-ways at the time, our ocean going commerce would probably have “died a-borning.”

In spite of chance and change, of shipwreck and discouragements due to the Revolution, a decade after the close of the war shipping had revived to such an extent that a fleet of twelve vessels including one brig, two top-sail schooners and nine sloops was owned on the *Georges*. In addition vessels were occasionally



built for outside interests. They made many profitable voyages coasting to Boston, and carried lumber to the West Indies whence they brought back the much sought "W. I. goods." In 1796 the brig *Neptune*, owned in Warren, was chartered with lumber for Liverpool with orders for her immediate return. She was such a good sailer that her captain kept her in foreign waters. When a year and a half had passed without receipt of dividends one of the owners took passage across in another vessel to investigate. He finally located the *Neptune* in Amsterdam, but so involved in debt by her runaway master that she was as total a loss to her owners as though she were lying at the bottom of Davy Jones's locker.

Vessels might be the victims of their natural enemies, the wind and the wave, they might be captured or destroyed by their unnatural enemies, the British and the French, or they might be stolen and sold by a faithless master, but so long as the settlers were rearing large families of sturdy sons with the gleam of far-off lands in their eyes, the future of the merchant marine was safe. In 1798, Capt. John Spear and sons, Robert, Thomas, John (Capt.), Hugh, William, Isaac, David (Capt.), Edward, Samuel, and Alexander, of Warren built the schooner *Ten Brothers*. Count them for yourself. Since Alexander, the youngest, was fourteen at the time, Captain John could also have manned his schooner from his own brood.

With the Revolution over one might think shipping could have gone on its way unmolested. For a time it did, so far as England was concerned, but France which had helped us achieve our freedom was now battling for her liberties, and made it known to us that she would appreciate a little reciprocity on our part. It seems as though it would have been the decent thing to do, but Washington, to the great disgust of France, decided to avoid all entangling alliances by proclaiming a strict neutrality, and the requested help was not forthcoming. France retaliated by interfering with our shipping. For seven years until the treaty of 1800, French privateers ranged the seas striking terror into the hearts of those who a few short years before had called her "friend." Because of its exposed position, the *Gig*, then a part of Thomaston, was repeatedly subjected to attacks by French

cruisers. The silver lining to that dark cloud was the "French Spoliation Claims," a glimmer of hope that was passed Micawber-like down through the generations. As a child, the writer used to hear the remark, "So-and-so" is hoping to get something if the "French *Spoliation Claims*" are ever settled. Since Justice is not only blindfolded, but frequently given to procrastination no one despoiled was ever compensated. The claims were not settled until 1892, a full century after the spoliations occurred.

About 1800, after the treaty with France was signed, there was a decided upswing in shipping. Cargoes of boards and staves were sent to the West Indies, and Great Britain and Ireland were calling for timber. Vessels loaded at Georges River wharves and took their cargoes directly to their destination, bringing back the much sought foreign goods, for as yet American manufactures were rather crude. Everybody began to prosper and everybody was happy. Knox had come to Thomaston to live and to develop his vast estate. Surely Thomaston's star was in the ascendancy. For a brief period only, however, because after a few short years Knox was stricken and the rising star which had promised to be one of great magnitude suddenly became a falling star. Thomaston's light almost went out.

The loss of Knox's leadership coupled with the difficulties preceding the War of 1812 brought on a crisis as baffling as that of 1775. So harassed were ship-masters and ship-builders that lawful maritime ventures were virtually at a standstill.

Hostilities between France and England again flared and our neutral shipping was once more caught as between the jaws of a vise. No matter where our vessels sailed or what they carried as cargoes they were in danger of seizure. The brig *Sumner* of Warren with wheat for Spain was captured and sunk. It was not uncommon for a vessel to be captured by one side and then captor and victim in turn taken by the other side as was the *Peggy* of Oyster River.

Not only were vessels on the high seas molested, but all along the coast ships if not burned on the stocks by the British were allowed to rot there. So much vessel property was confiscated or destroyed that at Oyster River one builder sank his vessel where she lay. He did not raise her until the war was over and there was



once again some semblance of profit in maritime ventures. The 500 ton ship *Holofernes* launched at the Gig in November 1809, and the *British Trader*, tonnage unknown, launched on the Georges the same year, lay in their respective rivers until the close of the War.

Even more devastating than the depredations of the two belligerents was the effect of the Embargo imposed by our government in 1807. History says that, "vessels were confined in port, seamen were thrown out of employment, lumber found no sale, timber designed for exportation remained upon the shores, landings, or in the holds of vessels . . . The people of this town shared in the common distress and partook of the general indignation." Protests were made to the government but without avail. After a time, when it became apparent that the Embargo was not accomplishing its purpose, a non-intercourse act with France and Britain was substituted. Coastwise traffic was then resumed, and trade with some foreign countries. While the vessels had the legal right to be out and many of them were sailing under letters of *marque* and reprisal, they were just as likely to be robbed of their crews for impressment in the British navy, or to be captured and sunk. Only occasionally could the enemy be outwitted as by Capt. Elisha Snow, Jr. His vessel, lumber laden, was captured in the West Indies, and a prize crew put aboard. They were not able to hold her long, however, for Capt. Snow and his Negro cook soon connived to regain control, after which the French crew was set ashore and the vessel brought safely home.

At the outbreak of the War the oldest and least valuable vessels ventured to sea and for a time were treated rather leniently by the British cruisers which often allowed them to proceed after a routine examination. Later, however, the crews instead of being sent ashore were transferred to prison ships where they were kept in "durance vile" for months before being transferred to Halifax or Dartmoor. Capt. Thomas Morison of Warren, although a prisoner aboard the *Africa*, a "ship of the line," had the thrill of a lifetime when he was privileged to see our beloved *Constitution* in command of Capt. Hull elude the British squadron after a running fight which lasted three days and

three nights. “He who fights and runs away will live to fight another day.” One month later in her thirty minutes’ struggle with the *Guerrière*, the *Constitution* won the nickname of “Old Ironsides” and immortality.

During all that period of doubt and despair, of restrictions and restraint, John Paine at the Narrows managed in one way or another to keep up a fairly regular traffic with England, shipping lumber in various forms and bringing back salt, coal, dry goods, and hardware for the Thomaston or the Boston market. The traffic was carried on in his own vessels or in English vessels on contract without heavy material loss. As recorded elsewhere we know that Thomaston’s one bona-fide venture in privateering was due to Paine’s initiative, and would probably have been followed by others had not a messenger come riding out of the West one cold day in February, 1815, lustily blowing a trumpet proclaiming the glad tidings that *Peace* had once more been declared. “Crowds followed with shouts of joy to the village, guns were fired, the Paul Revere bell sounded, instruments of music were put in requisition, houses were illuminated, bonfires were kindled, and general demonstrations of joy were exhibited.” A day of Thanksgiving being appointed by the General Court that, too, was observed. Maine at that time was still a part of Massachusetts.

Cyrus Eaton, who was an eye witness to all that was happening at that time, says: “Though the war was now over, it was but slowly that the country recovered from its effects, and such is the consequence of sudden changes that even peace was not without its disappointments. Such of the shipping as had escaped capture, was now refitted and sent to sea, commerce revived, and an extensive importation of European fabrics reduced prices so low as to check domestic manufactures and impair the value of wool, sheep, factories, and manufacturing stock; capital had disappeared, and the country, as well as individuals, was in debt. A great deterioration of morals, inseparable from a state of war, and also from the fluctuations of fortune, incident to privateering, gambling, speculation, and illicit trade, was now sensibly felt through the community.”

One man who kept his head during this reversal of circum-



stances was John Paine. He bought the *Bristol Trader* which had been lying in the river six years, had her fitted out for sea, loaded her with lumber and sent her to Bristol, England. She sailed to and fro between the two ports for many years.

Paine was soon to learn, however, that peace as well as war hath its disadvantages. In war time the American vessels that were able to run the blockade had the edge on vessels of other nationalities. Peace, in levelling the barriers, opened up shipping to the tonnage of all nations. Freights toppled, markets became overstocked, and what had been a venture with a possibility of a profit became a risk not worth the undertaking. Paine could cope with his enemies; only the Lord could protect him from his friends. Matters went from bad to worse and this enterprising and persevering merchant eventually gave up the struggle about 1820. Some idea of the extent of his business may be gleaned from the fact that during the years of his fairly brief career in Thomaston he paid into the United States Treasury import duties to the amount of \$170,000.

The following advertisement of a Thomaston merchant's store in 1825 gives some idea of the variety and value of foreign goods imported at that time:

P. Keegan has just received by late arrival from Boston, a large assortment of the most fashionable English, India & American Goods, comprising

Nanking, Canton & Italian Crape, Sinchow, Sarsnet & Florence Silks, elegant plaid silks; Twilled Levantines; an elegant assortment of Ribbons; black and white silk Gloves; kid and beaver do. English plaid & flag silk do; black twill'd do; black fig'd silk vestings; Toilonet & Marsailles do; Marino mantles; cassimere shawls; white colored cravats; superfine cambric & muslin prints; dimoties; Irish linens; linnen cambrick; imitation do; English gingham; furniture; patch & coperplate; umbrillas; fans; ladies' and gentlemen's hose; black, blue and mixture, superfine broadcloths; black, blue & mixed, plain & ribbed cassimeres; satinetts, &c, &c.

Also Boots & Shoes

Books & Stationery

Also Paper hangings

Glass & Crockery ware  
(fancy lustre do.)

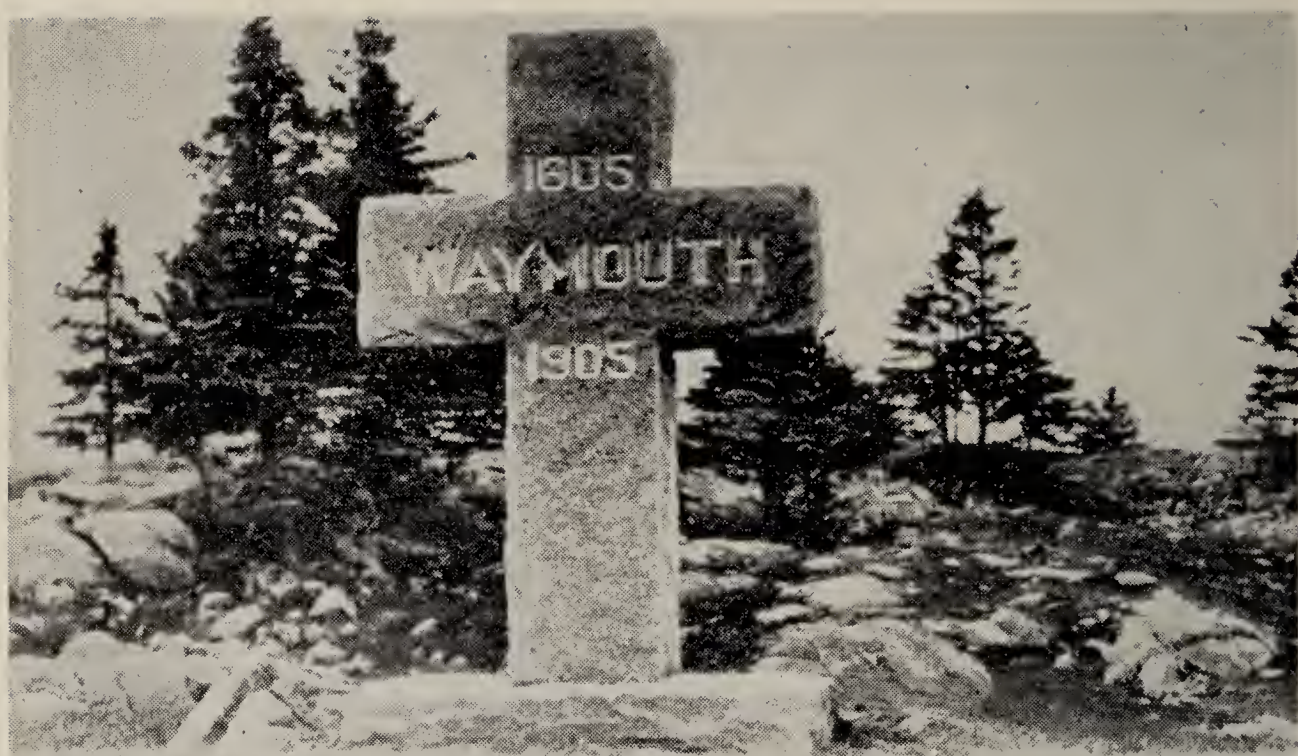
Also fancy cutlery;

Also Mill files, flat round and three squared do. Saws; Squares; Shovels; hoes; sythes and snaths; hay rakes; sythe stones; Blister, German, and Cast Steel.



Top: Ship *Claiborne* built at Warren 1840. Bottom: Ship *Vaucluse* built at Thomaston in 1850. Portholes are painted to deceive pirates.





Top: Cross on Allen's Island at mouth of Georges to mark the 300th anniversary of the discovery of the river. Bottom: Barkentine *Reine Marie Stewart* at wharf in Thomaston.



Also Paints, Oils, & Dye Stuffs.

W. I. Goods & Groceries

Jamaica, St. Croix & N. E. Rum; cherry do; Old Cog & French brandy; Holl. & Am. gin; old Whiskey; A few bottles real London brown stout; best New York porter, and strong beer; real old Port wine; S. Madeira do; Lisbon & Malay wines; Best olive oil; Lemon syrup; Hyson & Suchong Teas; Best Coffee; New Orleans, Havana, white & brown Sugars; Lump and loaf do; Ground canister & bottled mustard; N. Orleans & W. I. molasses; Raisins, Rice, Flour, corn, meal, rye, oats, coarse and butter salt, dried apples, tobacco, segars &c

Drugs & Medicine

Castor oil; Opium; Paragoric; Guacum; Gamboge; Jalap; Picra; Indian arrow root; Red precipitate; Aloes; Camphor; Castor; Calomil; Syringes; Breast pipes; Peppermint; Burgundy pitch; Pink root Worm seed; Sulphur; Cream-tartar; Salts; &c.

Patent Medicines

Anderson's Cough drops; Godfrey's cordials; British Oil; Starr's opodeldoc; Wheaton's Itch ointment; Cephalic snuff.

At the close of his “ad” the enterprising merchant said, “P. Keenan hopes from the quality of his goods and the fairness of his prices he shall be enabled to give general satisfaction to his customers.”

Little wonder that fleets of swift coasters and wind-jammers were scurrying up and down the shore and to and fro across the oceans when even one little country store on the Georges was calling for such an assortment of goods!

About the same time, the Brig *Thomas & William*, Capt. Colley, came up the river with a cargo of coal and sixty-eight Irish passengers!

From the very earliest days coasters had been the lifeline of the colonies. They were the one and only means of communication and transportation, picking up and delivering cargoes and passengers all along the Atlantic seaboard.

About 1822, when the demand for lime increased, its production was speeded up, giving employment to twelve or fifteen coasters to Boston and other ports. Brigs and schooners were also carrying cargoes of lime and other freights to the South and to the West Indies and Europe. Since at that time every coaster derived no little revenue from its passenger service, short and frequent trips were to the advantage of all concerned. Not only were the coasters a profitable investment for the owners; but, in giving employment to the youth of the region, they served as a nursery



for seamen, from which many a poor man's son and penniless orphan later came to command ships of a thousand tons and circumnavigate the globe.

It was customary for a captain to own a commanding part of his vessel. When that was the case he was also the ship's manager, attending to the chartering, freights and so forth. It has been claimed that the superiority of the Yankee skipper over that of all other nationalities was due to the fact he was not merely a sailor, but a combination of mariner, shipowner, and business man plus ambition. He was not merely interested in bringing his vessel into port, as desirable a consummation as that was, nor in merely receiving a captain's wage. He wanted more and better things and he got them by able seamanship and by using his sharp Yankee wits as a trader. Occasionally, as did Capt. Ranlett of the bark *Sunbeam*, he sold his cargo at auction. A smart captain, given a fair voyage, frequently made his vessel pay for itself on its first trip. Charles R. Flint says, "While we built superior clipper ships with sharp bows, clean runs, and unprecedented sail area, our success was due more to men than design. The American clipper ship captains were the most daring, and their crews under the most perfect control, that the world had ever known."

While Thomaston vessels went anywhere and everywhere, during the 1830's and '40's, the majority of them were engaged in the West Indian and European trade. Not until the gold rush in '49 did they go racing round the Horn in great numbers. Even in those exciting times many still steadfastly clung to the bird in hand, making regular if less spectacular trips with cargoes of cotton from New Orleans, Mobile and other southern ports to Liverpool, Havre, Amsterdam and Bremen. So constant were Thomaston vessels in their visits to Liverpool that sometime in the Fifties a thoroughfare was laid out in that city and named "Thomaston Street" to do them honor.

Because of the extensive traffic with and for the South, and because of the many friendships built up in consequence of it, Thomaston was full of Southern sympathizers at the time of the Civil War. It was rumored at one time that a few of the most ardent actually plotted to raise a military company to go to the

South's defense. That was a perfectly natural reaction because, all ties of friendship aside, the same forces that would throttle the South would at the same time lay a heavy hand on Thomaston's great industry, the building and sailing of ships. A few of the most hard-headed persistently clung to the belief that the problem might have been solved without resorting to war.

A few extracts from Capt. Ranlett's diary will show where Thomaston captains were and what they were doing during the years immediately following, the years '50, '51, '52.

Oct. 26, 1850—Captain William Henderson started to-day to take the *Hancock* out to New Orleans. The owners have received a new offer for the *Miltiades* and Isaac Chapman has gone to Boston to see about it. They did not sell the *Miltiades* and Capt. Richard Robinson goes to-morrow to Portland to take her to New Orleans.

Nov. 8—Several of the widower captains are courting and the latest match to be announced is that of Eddie (Capt. Edmund R.) Webb and Sarah Woodhull, the minister's daughter.

Ship *James Nesmith* sailed today.

Nov. 29—Capt. Joshua Jordan had 47 days' passage to New Orleans.

Capt. Edwin Counce put into St. Thomas in distress. He lost his foremast and his mizzenmast in a violent gale of wind. It will take a month to repair.

There is sleighing to-day and the captains are giving the girls a ride.

The ship *John* and *Lucy*, Capt. Curling sailed the 25th for New Orleans: freights there are a little better.

The *Charlemagne* and the *Talleyrand* have loaded for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cent, freights are now firm at fifteen-sixteenths.

Dec. 4—Morton had trouble to-day in launching his vessel: It seems that one side of the ways was fifteen feet longer than the other and that caused her to go over on her side, her masts in the water and her keel out, and there she now lies with her decks up and down.



The ship *Telamon*, Capt. Snow, sailed to-day and is having a fine chance off.

Dec. 18—The *Amelia* is going to Havre for fifteen-sixteenths of a cent.

Dec. 26—Yesterday and the day before we had the most severe gale of wind . . . for many years. One vessel went ashore at Rockland and was burnt up and two or three at Seal Harbor and two or three more at Tenant's Harbor and Herring Gut. (now Port Clyde)

Capt. Stimpson in the *Statesman* got into Boston the day before the storm, being 54 days from Liverpool.

George Jordan in the *Midas* arrived in San Francisco the first of November. There is a good deal of cholera in San Francisco and Sacramento and a good many New England people have died.

Dec. 26—Last night (Christmas evening) there was a great party at Capt. Ed. Robinson's. Everybody in the village was invited. My wife went and I staid at home and took care of the babies.

Jan. 4, 1851—The *Amelia* was towed down the river from New Orleans the 23rd and sailed with the best freight that has been given this season. The *Pyramid* and *James Nesmith* are going to Liverpool.

(The two following entries are of vessels not local, but of great interest.)

Jan. 24—The steamship *Atlantic* of the Collins line left Liverpool on the 28th of December and nothing has been heard of her since, now 27 days. Abbott Lawrence is a passenger by her. The *Asia* on her last trip to Liverpool made the shortest voyage ever made between New York and Liverpool.

Capt. James Henderson is at home this winter, also Capt. Joseph Wilson; he sold the *Fornax* in New Orleans for \$4000. The Mortons sold the barque they built this year for \$17,000, one quarter cash and the balance in thirty, sixty, and ninety days. It is considered a very good sale.

Capt. Webb had letters to-day from Fales in the *Nisida Stewart*. He made the passage out to California in less than 150 days. There have been a number of clipper ships launched . . . and a number have sailed for California.

The *Walter R. Jones* has been up for San Francisco two months and is not half loaded yet, it is said. Capt. William Colley is going on her.

Jan. 29—Letters have come from Capt. Ambrose Snow in the *Telamon* and Raymond Gillchrest in the *Vancluse*. They had hard passages. The *Vancluse* leaked badly. The *Miltiades* is loading for New York. She began with 500 barrels of pork at seventy cents.

Feb. 5—Capt. J. L. Jordan in the *Arcadia* cleared on the 24th for Havre. The *Telamon* and *Vancluse* are loading, one for Liverpool, and the other for Havre. There is not a Thomaston vessel in now unengaged—freights one and a fourth cents from Havre.

Buxton and Dow came home from California and have been badly off in health ever since. There is to be a great ball in the hall Friday evening.

Feb. 12—Skating on the river to-day. As many as fifty boys and men there and a good time.

The *Nisida Stewart* was in port (San Francisco) about a month and her expenses were less than \$2500. They begin to say the California business is the best business going.

The *Miltiades* is in New York. The owners talk of selling her and getting funds for building next season.

Feb. 13—The ball is to-morrow evening and I have an invitation, but I am so lame after my skating that I cannot go . . .

Feb. 15—The ball came off last night . . . 75 couples, and I understand they had a good time of it. They kept it up until five o'clock this morning. I don't begrudge them the pleasure, for I think I feel as well as any of them this morning.

Capt. Sam Watts and Curling have cleared from New Orleans for Liverpool. Watts has the largest cargo, 3228 bales, ten more than Curling.

Feb. 18—We are much pleased to hear this morning from the steamship *Atlantic*. She got as far west as Long. 41, encountering heavy gales when she broke her main shaft, rendering her engines perfectly useless. After trying several days to go to westward gave up and bore away to the coast of Europe and arrived in Cork the 22nd day of January.



Mar. 1851—Capt. Arthur Fales in the *Louisa Bliss* has not been heard from in a long time and some fear for his safety is entertained by his friends. He was bound to Callao and then to Liverpool; he is much out of time, but we hope not lost. The ship *Talleyrand* has been ashore going into Charleston and had hard thumping for fourteen hours.

Apr. 1852—The barque *Miltiades* was at last account in Havre, not taking up as freights are dull there.

The ship *Loretta Fish* is on her passage from New Orleans to some northern port.

Apr. 15, 1852—The barque *Byron* on which Capt. Stackpole was killed (at the wheel) has arrived in New York. Mrs. Stackpole is going on to meet the mate and learn the particulars.

Apr. 29—There is a great time in Boston to-day. They are receiving Louis Kossuth, one of the Hungarian exiles. He has been in the United States three or four months, in some places receiving much attention, and the papers are full of his speeches and much sympathy is manifested for him and his country. I do not know how deserving he is, but I fear our people will overdo the thing, as they are prone to do.

Mar. 20, 1852—Thorndike (of South Thomaston) built a ship (the *Empire*) of 1300 tons and took her to New York and sold her for \$70,000. She is now loading for California.

Apr. 15—Creighton in the *William Stetson* has just cleared from New Orleans for Liverpool with a cargo of 4200 bales of cotton, 1,850,000 pounds.

Then, in the final entry, addressing the relative for whose perusal he was keeping the diary, "We shall now be looking for your arrival in Liverpool. It seems that you are near when we can hear from you in fifteen days!"

That period of which Capt. Ranlett wrote was also the period of great achievement in the McKay ship yards at East Boston; the period when American-built vessels whether they carried a shred of canvas or were borne along by an acre and a half of it (as was the ill-fated *Great Republic*) outsailed everything afloat. In order to maintain their highest speed and to prevent terrified sailors from cutting the halyards, some sails were chained and padlocked

and never taken in until "God-Almighty took them in." Charles R. Flint, a native of Thomaston, the author of *Men and Ships and Sealing Wax* says that, "very often the captain of an ordinary sailing ship, in a gale with sails reefed, would see way behind him a white speck on the horizon, watch it grow until it came up and passed him—a splendid ship with every sail set, flinging the Stars and Stripes to the wind as she went roaring by—and then gaze after her until she disappeared miles ahead of him."

While favoring winds were still blowing these breath-taking creatures from victory to victory there suddenly appeared a speck on the southern horizon, a speck at first no larger than a man's hand, but a persistent one, one that could not be outsailed no matter how fast a vessel sped away from it nor how often she changed her course. It simply could not be outsailed. As time went on, the speck rolled up higher and higher, growing more and more ominous finally to burst into the disastrous whirlwind known as the "Rebellion" which all but drove our merchant marine from the seas it had just begun to dominate.

Coupled with this disaster rolling up from the South there came a most serious nation-wide financial depression in 1857. Banks all over the country suspended specie payment. The Georges Bank followed suit, although it was claimed that Edward O'Brien, its president, had "a sufficient exchange on Baring Brothers, Liverpool, to redeem every note which the bank had in circulation."

Disaster, fell disaster, overtook Thomaston vessels as it did all other American shipping. The Atlantic and Gulf ports were closed to every proud craft that had so confidently sailed in and out of their friendly harbors for many decades. As soon as Lincoln's election was confirmed trouble began to brew. The *William Singer* arriving in New Orleans Oct. 27, 1860, was detained and denied a freight for nearly three months because one of its owners, the man for whom it was named, was a Republican! The *General Knox* and two other vessels were lying in the Pamunky River, Virginia, in April, 1861, loading ship-frames to bring back to Thomaston. When war was declared the three ships were seized, cargo, lumbering equipment, teams, and all, to the value of \$19,000. The crews were ordered ashore, the "secesh"



flag was run up to the masthead of the *General Knox* and cannon put aboard. Occasionally a vessel did succeed in running the blockade, but it was dangerous business. Vessels were sold to go under foreign registry or, if in foreign waters, remained there. Being in Chinese waters at the outbreak of hostilities one Thomaston captain, John Dizer, Sr., remained there in coastwise traffic until the Civil War was over. Sailors, denied their usual berths, enlisted in the navy or joined the "Boys in Blue" who were so valiantly fighting on land.

Confederate privateers were ranging up and down the seas from the Arctic, where whole fleets of whaling vessels were destroyed, to the Antarctic, and from our own Atlantic seaboard to the coast of Europe. Vessels carrying veritable arsenals sailed with only binnacle lights burning and every speck on the horizon was eyed with suspicion and dread. The *Shenandoah*, the *Tallahassee*, and the *Alabama* were names that struck terror to the hearts of every seaman from the lowliest deckhand to the most stout hearted captain.

Ships were captured and sunk without mercy and without fear or favor. "Betsy" Watts of Thomaston tried to argue with a lieutenant from the *Tallahassee* who was sent to board her husband's vessel, the *Glen Avon*. The barque was homeward bound from Glasgow with a cargo of iron when she was halted by the *Tallahassee* and boarded. "Betsy" was down below. Hearing the commotion, she rushed up on deck not to take orders, but to breathe defiance. She would tell the ruthless rebels what she thought of them! "Betsy" was never known to mince her words and it is said she did not then, yet even she had to bow to fate, take to the boats with the crew, and watch the lurid flames devour their proud barque.

Capt. James Chapman of whom it was said he would rather fight than eat, met Capt. Raphael Semmes of the "*Alabama*" at Gibraltar. Having much in common they struck up an acquaintance which developed into a comradeship founded on mutual admiration and respect. One night after a long and friendly session at cards in the cabin of Chapman's ship, Chapman said to Semmes, "All I have for the support of my family is my master's interest in this ship which I cannot afford to insure. I am inter-

ested to know what you will do if you happen to sight my ship out on the ocean.” Without hesitation Semmes replied, “As captain of the *Alabama*, it is my duty to burn every northern vessel that I can overhaul and no exception will be made if the vessel in question happens to be yours.” Chapman escaped. Semmes, however, got a taste of his own medicine when Capt. Winslow of the *Kearsage* compelled him and his crew to take to the boats off Cherbourg, France, June 19, 1864, and the *Alabama* was sunk.

It was during those troublous days that the barque *Sunbeam*, Capt. Ranlett, was built, launched and sailed on her voyage around the world and halfway round again. From the time she left Thomaston in March, 1864, until she arrived in Cork in 1865, her captain or crew had not been able to breathe freely. In cork they learned that the great conflict was at an end and that henceforth every sail would be a friendly one, not an object of dread.

After the war it was some years before the stunned and demoralized South could once more resume its cotton-producing stride. However, hunger and want, if not great slave-drivers, are great task-masters and in an incredibly short time the blood-soaked plantations, as though “washed in the blood of the Lamb” once again became “whiter than the snow.” Then Thomaston vessels, borne by snow-white sails, again became a familiar sight in southern waters. Among the first to appear there were several of the O’Brien fleet. At one time three of them carried cargoes of cotton from Norfolk to Liverpool, 24,000 bales, each weighing from 400 to 450 pounds, with an aggregate value of one and one-half million dollars. In January, 1878, one of the fleet, the *Alexander Gibson*, sailed to Liverpool with 3,712,823 pounds of cotton, which the local paper states was doubtless the largest cargo ever shipped from the United States.

When O’Brien died in 1882, a Norfolk, Virginia, newspaper printed a eulogy, calling him one of Maine’s most distinguished sons and stating that the United States had lost its largest and most successful ship owner. To quote: “His name added to the fame of American commerce . . . He deserves to be remembered in Virginia. He was one of those enterprising New Englanders who appreciated Virginia’s resources and assisted in developing them. While loyal to the North, his friendships formed in the



Old Dominion before the War secured us his sympathy in our sorrows. The O'Brien fleet, floating the Stars and Stripes amid the foreign flags which have crowded our wharves during the cotton season, was always a sight to inspire pride of country and gladden the hearts of patriotic Americans." One of his vessels was in Norfolk at the time, its flag half-mast.

The Thomaston Herald of May 10, 1878, states: "During the past two months both of the San Francisco lines have been almost exclusively supplied by Thomaston tonnage. The ships are attracting the attention of shippers and all others interested in marine matters, and Thomaston has every reason to regard with pride this exhibition of her builders and the enterprise of her citizens."

During the 1870's and '80's Thomaston Cape Horners sailed from Boston or New York with a general cargo to San Francisco or with case oil to Japan. From San Francisco they took wheat to Liverpool, returning with salt or manufactured goods. If freights to Liverpool were dull they took their grain or a general cargo to Japan or the Philippines, returning with silk, soft coal, or sugar. Some of the ships completed the circuit by bringing Oregon spars to the East Coast. The *Belle O'Brien* came back home to the Georges from Liverpool with iron masts and spars for her sister ship, the *Edward O'Brien*. They carried nitrates from northern Chile to Bremen and other European ports to be used in fertilizers to make gardens grow to feed the people or to be used in the manufacture of explosives to blow them up. One of California's coal bins was in Japan, another in Cardiff, Wales—not very handy, but there were plenty of Thomaston vessels ready and willing to tote the coal for a price. The *Frank Curling* out of Cardiff for San Francisco, loaded with the treacherous stuff, went down off the Horn in a hurricane. It is said that Cap'n Frank, in his anxiety to make time, "carried on too long." The cargo shifted, causing the ship to turn turtle. Half the crew was lost. The captain's boat happened to be picked up, so he lived to tell the tale. Cap'n Frank's next ship, the *Joseph Spinney*, made a reputation for itself on the Cape Horn and Far East routes.

One October the *Spinney* sailed from San Francisco. She had fine weather to the Cape, which she rounded December 11th.

There she fell in with such vast quantities of ice that she was obliged to alter her course. For nineteen hundred and sixty-nine miles she sailed among the icebergs, one of which was estimated to be five miles long and one hundred and fifty-six feet high. The top was almost perfectly flat. At times the bergs would scatter so there were only two or three in sight, again they would close in until the *Spinney* was almost completely surrounded. She finally managed to show them a clean pair of heels and crossed the line on the sixteenth of January. She was finally sold for the West Coast-Australian lumber trade.

On the long voyages around the Horn, regardless of the time of sailing, the vessels ran the gamut of the seasons and the gauntlet of the weather. Leaving the temperate latitudes of either New York or San Francisco, they found themselves ere long in the equatorial regions of perpetual summer, the doldrums, where the tar oozed from the seams of the vessels, and the deck as well as the fo'cas'l' and cabin became an inferno. In due time the Horn was reached and there the vessel that did not encounter almost overwhelming difficulties was the exception rather than the rule.

The shorter voyages to the West Indies and the eastern ports of South America were not without their hazards, either. If vessels thither-bound managed to escape the fogs off the Jersey coast, the “line storms,” the tropical hurricanes, and the sandy bars and reefs fringing our southern waters they could always count on Hatteras to make things lively. To the writer during childhood the phrase “off Hatteras” conveyed the same impression as the “sunk without a trace” of later years.

So often did vessels founder or were dismasted during the West Indian hurricane season, which occurs during late August and September, that many captains, after they had secured a competence, stayed home a trip and let a younger man take command if the charter called for a Caribbean destination during those months. The writer does not mean to imply these men were weaklings or molly-coddles. They had nothing but contempt for the cautious captain of a coasting vessel who was in port every night, but a little bona-fide hurricane experience goes a long way.

Not all the dangers were from without. Sometimes cargoes



shifted, sometimes they caught fire. Soft coal was especially hazardous, because of the danger from spontaneous combustion. Grain was bad if a vessel chanced to spring a leak. The water would swell the grain which in turn often choked the pumps and put them out of commission. The barque *Sunbeam* met her fate in that way. Loaded with rice she lay in the *Irrawaddy* River waiting to sail. She sprang a leak. The quick swelling of the rice opened up her seams and she sank where she lay. In January, 1888, the *Alfred D. Snow* from San Francisco to Liverpool with grain, sprang a leak, became waterlogged, and foundered in the Irish Sea. The crew of twenty-eight took to the boats. In attempting to land in rough water all were lost. The captain, mate, and ship's carpenter were all from Thomaston.

When disaster came the blow usually fell heavily, for oftentimes one or more officers and several men before the mast, as well as the captain were from our little town, and not infrequently the captain's wife and children were aboard, too, as in the case of the *Minnie Watts* which went down near the Horn.

The captains of sailing vessels were anxious, not only to carry the largest cargo at the best possible freight, but there was a friendly rivalry between them as to whose ship could make the quickest passage. The barque *Minnie Watts* made a fast passage of seventeen days from Philadelphia to Liverpool; the ship *Barling Brothers* made the same passage in fourteen days; the *Levanter* was thirty days going from Hampton Roads to Koneigsburg, Russia; the *Joseph Spinney*, eighty-three days and twenty hours from Portland, Maine, to Callao; the *Harvey Mills*, one hundred and one days from San Francisco to Liverpool; the *Harvey Mills* and the *Abner I. Benyon*, one hundred twenty days from San Francisco to Antwerp. In the late Seventies three Thomaston ships sailed from New York to San Francisco within a week of each other. The "*Joseph Spinney* sailed first; five days later the *Abner I. Benyon*, and eight days after that, the *Harvey Mills*. The *Spinney* made the passage in one hundred thirty-eight days; the *Benyon*, in one hundred forty-two; and the *Mills*, in one hundred twenty-seven, fulfilling the Scripture, "The last shall be first." Of other Thomaston-built ships, the *H. S. Gregory* made the passage in one hundred fifteen days; the *Pactolus*, in one hun-

dred fourteen days; and in 1877 the *St. Charles*, built in Thomaston in 1866, was driven from New York to San Francisco in 110 days, beating the passage of any other Thomaston ship by four days and the passage of the famous clipper, *David Crockett* by three days. The secret lay in the daring of her master, "Ed" Gates. He was about twenty years of age and it was his first trip as master of any ship. Later, while carrying 400,000 cases of oil, 96 cases of glass ware, 25 cases of blacking and 509 boxes of soap to Japan she was burned and scuttled. Evidently the Japs to whom her cargo had been consigned had planned to clean up, light up, and spruce up. How disappointed they must have been!

As the West developed and overland communication grew apace, trips around the Horn became more and more infrequent. Transcontinental railroad construction, however, did not start in the East and end on the West coast. It started at both ends, each groping its way toward the other over mountain, desert, and plain, to be finally united not with a ring, but with a golden spike. So, until those lines were completed, railroad equipment, both rails and rolling stock, and all sorts of general construction material had to be routed around the Horn.

The barque, *Minnie Watts*, Cap'n Edwin Watts, sailed from New York on the 20th of May, 1883, bound for Portland, Oregon, with railroad rails and car wheels. On the 22nd of July she was spoken east of Cape Horn by the Thomaston ship, *J. B. Walker*. The following week a British ship saw a vessel supposed to be the *Minnie Watts* disappear to westward during a heavy storm. She was never reported after that. The captain, his wife, oldest son (who was mate) and two daughters went down with her. The family was wiped out with the exception of one son, Edwin, who had been left in France to continue his schooling.

Although the *Minnie Watts* did not arrive, many other Thomaston vessels carrying similar cargoes did. Some of them were sold in Pacific ports for the Northwest lumber trade and the Alaskan salmon traffic. Others were used in the coast route to Western South America. In the sea story, "Cappy Ricks," young "Matt Peasley" purported to be a scion of a Thomaston sea-faring family, was supposedly running on that route when he was tested for stamina by his employer "Cappy" who forced him to bring



“green” hides from Chile to San Francisco. Judging from the author’s description of the cargo, it was even more odoriferous than guano. The only feature of the story that does not ring true is that “Matt” was cradled on the Grand Banks. Thomaston boys did not need to go there for their initiation to sailordom; there were plenty of berths awaiting them in the ocean going craft built on the Georges.

Thomaston vessels were sold for trans-Pacific routes, too. They sailed to Australia, to China, Japan, the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands, carrying cargoes of wheat, wool, sugar, tea, oil, coal and silk. For a number of years Cap’n “Bert” Williams of Thomaston was engaged in sealing and whaling in the North Pacific to whose waters his ashes were consigned after his death.

The same western development that sounded the death knell of Thomaston ship building made a bid for Thomaston capital. While some of the capital was irrevocably sunk in mining shafts more was lost by the bursting of promotion bubbles and booms, much of the money did go into the permanent upbuilding of the West. It has been said that in the early Eighties of the last century as in the late Twenties of this, it was generally believed prosperity had come to stay forever!

Schooners, built in the Eighteen-nineties and the first few years of the present century were engaged chiefly in trade with the West Indies and the east coast of South America, carrying down lumber, granite, flour, ice, apples, and all sorts of manufactured goods, bringing back sugar, coffee, cocoa, hides, wool, hair, mahogany and other tropical woods. The lime coasters were also plying to and fro, but in the Thomastonian mind there was a “great gulf fixed” between the small “coasters” and the deep water craft. The coasters were the “Marthas” of the shipping business, a little better than a barge, but never, no never, classed with the proud “Marys” of the fleet.

In 1925 when the *Benjamin F. Packard*, a Bath square-rigger, the last of her line, was to be scrapped, Capt. John F. Milliken, secretary and treasurer of the Neptune Association paid homage to all sail and sailors in this tribute: “Few people realize the part played by these wooden merchant vessels during the Revolution. Numbering well over four hundred they captured or destroyed

three times as many of the enemy ships as did our regular Navy. The merchant navy was even more powerful in the War of 1812.

“Not only did these wooden ships save the Nation, but they built it up. They developed trade, made business, and did much to educate the Nation. All kinds of business saw their beginning in wooden sailing vessels. They were the first whalers, which gave America her start in the oil industry . . . the woolen business, cotton, lumber, tea, hemp, fertilizer, and fishing industries, and numerous others were made possible.”

And from another contemporary source: “One by one the famous ships have gone . . . because of this fact the *Packard*, last of a distinguished company, with her holds empty, her decks deserted, and her wheel forever in becketts, bears a cargo of forgotten memories, far more precious than any freight she carried in the days of her glory. But though they tear her rigging down, strip her mighty yards, and strike her ensign, the *Benjamin F. Packard* will not die.”

Neither will the memory die of the scores and scores of sister ships, brought into being on the Georges. Whether their bones lie at the bottom of the sea or bleach on a foreign strand recollections of their mystical beauty will haunt mankind as long as he dreams dreams and cherishes visions of the beautiful.



## *Thomaston Built 'em*

WHEN CAPTAIN GEORGE WEYMOUTH set out from England in 1605 to explore the coast of North Virginia, he brought with him aboard the Archangel the frame of a "pinnace" which was set up in Pentecost Harbor at the mouth of the Georges a few days after his discovery of that river. Having brought "coals to Newcastle," so to speak, it was probably with some sense of chagrin that he noted the woody growth near the river bank "not shrubbish but goodly tall fir, spruce, birch, beech, oak" and on the hills, "notable timber trees, masts for ships of 400 tons." England then, as now, was a maritime nation dependent upon her wooden vessels. Her forests of oak were beginning to be depleted. Here in this vast wilderness were seemingly inexhaustible stands of virgin forests sufficient to meet her needs for many years to come.

It was not, however, until 1630, a quarter of a century after its discovery, that a trading-post was erected on the banks of the Georges. By that time the route from England to New England had become "a well sailed path." Fleets of European fishing vessels were visiting the waters off the coast annually. In 1622, only two years after the founding of the Plymouth Colony, no less than "five and thirty sail" came to try their luck in these waters. Later, the Pilgrims, when they were facing starvation, "Having no *Egypte* to go *too*" sent some of their number to the eastward to secure fish. Ships carrying supplies from England to Plymouth were few and far between, but coming and going they, too, found it both necessary and profitable to make a stop at the Georges. The ships of that day were so small and their supply of provisions so inadequate that it was absolutely necessary to land whenever possible to secure fresh supplies of food and water. Then, too, every voyage, no matter what its avowed purpose, was

a voyage of exploration and discovery. No cove, no river was too small to be investigated; any shore might be a golden strand and, as such a potentiality, could not be overlooked. So, when the crew of any vessel landed anywhere for any reason whatsoever there was always a sharp outlook for treasure in any form. Being navigators all, whether fishermen or royal agents, the visitors to the trading post on the Georges were, like Weymouth, quick to see in every tall tree a potential mast in a potential vessel ready to carry them on a potential voyage to more distant shores for more fabulous wealth. Soon after the establishment of the post the traffic in lumber began. Gov. Winthrop says: "In July 1634, the *Hercules* of Dover returned by St. Georges to cut masts to carry to England" and "the Dartmoor ships cut all their masts at St. George."

The first masts taken to England were probably bound together and towed as rafts because the vessels of that day were not large enough to carry them as cargo. Sometimes a huge raft was bound in the shape of a ship's hull, launched, and with "sticks" and sails ploughed its own way to the shores of Great Britain. The voyage was long and perilous, but, if successful, brought great rewards since a single spar three feet in circumference "fetched" \$3000 in addition to a generous bounty. These huge spars were consigned to England for the navy. Indeed they were predestined for the navy. The British government sent scouts here to spot trees twenty-four inches or more in diameter and mark them with an arrow, the Crown's seal of ownership. Trespass in the King's woods was frowned upon and any violation of the use of the forest giants brought summary punishment in the form of a fine of £100.

Cyrus Eaton says the banks of the "Gig" (South Thomaston) were, as late as 1767, "covered with a magnificent growth of pines, whose age judging from the younger specimens left and more recently examined, must have ranged from 300 years downwards. In the first lumbering operations the rule was to cut no trunks so small that two men standing on opposite sides and extending their arms could *completely* encircle; and most of these, when sawed into boards, were perfectly free from knots larger than a man's thumb would cover. When the lands became divested of



the larger trees, the rule was to fell none smaller than would fill the arms of one man only."

As these unbroken forests ran down to the sea—in fact almost waded out into it—the only thing a shipbuilder had to do was to find a suitable cove where the finished vessel could be launched and begin operations. Even after the King had arrow-marked the choicest trees there were still millions of feet of lumber to be had almost for the asking, a very important factor in the cost of construction. In the process of clearing the land large quantities of naval stores, tar and pitch, were produced, making it unnecessary to import those ship-building essentials. Flax and hemp needed for sails and cordage were also grown in the colonies.

Roughly speaking, during the first century here in the New England colonies, vessels could be built at a cost of from \$9 to \$15 a ton. Because of the abundance of material and the low cost of fashioning it into sturdy vessels, shipbuilding early became an important colonial industry. Although the cost gradually rose during the following century to about \$34 a ton, shipbuilding continued to flourish, for the colonies could still build stanch vessels of oak for little more than half of what they cost in the Mother Country. It is claimed that at the time of the Revolution one-third of Britain's navy had been built on this side of the water, much of it in New England.

How did the great industry begin? The materials for shipbuilding, as has been noted, were right at hand, but where were the shipwrights? All the crafts of that day required long years of apprenticeship. Crafts were handed down from father to son for generations. In this Land of Promise there was neither time nor opportunity for such a slow procedure. Both England and the colonies had to have vessels and they had to have them immediately. In 1642 the Plymouth Company sent a carpenter and salt maker to its colony to meet two of its most pressing needs, salt making and boat building. The outlook was exceptionally promising for "the carpenter quickly builds two very good and strong shalops, with a great and strong lighter, and had hewn timbers for ketches" when he up and died of fever. Gov. Bradford in his *History of Plymouth* tells how, with this one and only shipbuilder gone, their dilemma was solved. "They

had no ship-carpenter amongst them, neither knew how to get one at *presente*; but they having an ingenious man that was a house carpenter, who also had wrought with y<sup>e</sup> ship carpenter (that was dead) when he built their boats, at their request he put forth him *selfe* to make a *triall* that way of his skill; and *tooke* one of y<sup>e</sup> *bigest* of ther *shalops* and sawed her in y<sup>e</sup> *midle*, and so *lenthened* her some 5. or 6. *foote*, and strengthened her with timbers, and so built her up, and laid a deck on her; and so made her a *conveniente* and wholesome *vessell*, very *fitt* & comfortable for their use, which did them *servise* 7. years after; and they *gott* her finished, and fitted with *sayles* & anchors, y<sup>e</sup> *insuing* year."

Over one hundred years later the same problem confronted the Scotch-Irish pioneers on the banks of the Georges, but it is doubtful if the Georges River recipe for boatbuilding called for a boat to begin with. The river was the only path from door to door and to the fort. A boat was therefore as necessary a part of the equipment of every home as was a bed or a fireplace. Shipwright or no shipwright each householder was of necessity his own boatbuilder. When the land was cleared and cord wood and staves were stacked up at every landing on the river, he began to think in terms of larger vessels, of sloops and of schooners to carry the product of his hard labor to distant ports. Best of all when the time came to build these larger vessels he was ready to undertake the job from the keel up. The work from keel to topmast, from stem to stern, including the carved figurehead, was all done by local men. No experts had to be imported.

Although the majority of the settlers on the Georges were from towns and cities and had never handled an axe in their lives, they soon became adept in its use for clearing the land, building log cabins, preparing cord wood, and manufacturing staves. While these preliminary occupations may seem to have been more or less trivial, determined wholly by expediency and restricted by local circumstance, they were nevertheless leading the way step by step to an industry which was to make the name of Thomaston known from one end of the world to the other—the building of wooden ships.

When the time came to build ships the skill acquired by the



pioneer in the use of the axe in the felling of trees and of the adze in the fashioning of logs and staves stood him in good stead. The manufacture of staves called for true lining and precision in every single unit if the finished barrel or hogshead were to be water tight. Anyone who could build a water-tight barrel could certainly build a water-tight boat. If there were any question in his mind on that score he had but to look about him and see how skillfully the Indians had calked the seams of their birch bark canoes by smearing them with spruce gum and pitch. It is interesting to note that the practice of waterproofing boats is as old as recorded history. A part of an inscription on an old Assyrian tablet dating back to 2100 B.C. describing the process reads: "Three *sari* of *bitumen* I poured over the outside. Three *sari* of *bitumen* I poured over the interior."

As experience ripened skill in boat building, increase in size was the natural outcome. In a few years after the close of the French and Indian Wars, sloops and schooners ranging from 80 to 200 tons were being hewn into shape in every suitable creek and cove of the region. So rapid was the growth of the industry that in less than forty years after the first sloop took to the waves from Packard's Rock in 1770, the McLoons and Haydens launched the *Holofernes*, a 500 ton ship at the Gig!

The first attempt at ship building in local waters was made by Hugh McLean, who set up the frame of a vessel at Andrews Point in the "Upper Town" (now Warren) in 1762. The times being unsettled the project was abandoned and the frame allowed to rot on the stocks. In 1770 a second attempt was made and carried to completion by Micah and Benjamin Packard for Capt. David Patterson. They chose Packard's Rock, a spot farther down the river within the bounds of the present town of Cushing, for their shipyard. The vessel, a sloop named the *Industry*, was launched late in the autumn of that year, the first vessel to be launched on the Georges. She had barely cleared the mouth of the river on her maiden voyage when she ran into a blinding snowstorm and was lost with all on board. Among the passengers were Benjamin Packard's wife and child and a Miss Patterson, a relative of the captain.

In 1775 Alexander and William Lermond built a schooner

named the *Dolphin* at Oyster River. Perhaps there may be after all some truth in the old adage, "the third time never fails," for the *Dolphin* was not only built and launched, but she managed to run the blockade for four successful years until she was "cast away."

Not until after the close of the Revolution when navigation was again a comparatively safe venture, was shipbuilding resumed. Warren immediately, in 1784, began the construction of vessels, launching at least one a year (with the exception of the years 1790 and 1794) until 1796 when a brig and five schooners were on the ways at one time. The good folk at the Gig were busy, too. Nineteen sloops and schooners were built in that part of the town before 1803 when Gen. Knox built the *Montpelier*, a 100-ton schooner, within the limits of the present town of Thomaston. For a full century from that year the name of Thomaston and shipbuilding were synonymous. It is claimed that Thomaston, which until the middle forties of the last century included both Rockland and South Thomaston, has the credit of having built more vessels than any other port in the country. Then came the great slump in the industry in the early years of the present century. The trade was revived during World War I, only to decline again. Steam and steel, unlovely but efficient, had all but driven the beautiful creatures of sail and wood from the bounding main.

In the early days of shipbuilding the plan of any given vessel was wholly in the master-builder's head. He had no mould, no drawing, no specifications other than the length of keel, breadth of beam and depth of hold of the vessel to be. With a crew he went into the nearby woods to get out the frame. While the masts, keel and planks were fashioned of straight timber there were other parts of the vessel such as the knees, *futtocks* (timbers in the frame) and the cat-head (projecting from bow to suspend the anchor away from the side of the vessel), which called for curved or crooked timbers. The stress and strain laid upon each one of these was so great that they could not be spliced. They had to be in one piece. Such pieces were called "compass" timbers. Since the size and shape of the compass timbers was an important factor in the size and shape of the finished vessel, the number and



size of trees yielding timbers from which such parts could be hewn was a very important factor in shipbuilding.

So heavy was the growth of timber in the vicinity of the Georges that for years and years there was a sufficiency to meet the great demands made upon it. The last vessel to be built wholly of timber cut in Knox County was the schooner *Eliza Levensaler*, launched in 1882. When the local supply of timber was exhausted the ship builders had to turn to Virginia for their live oak frames, first to Georgia and South Carolina and then to Oregon for their pine masts, and to Nova Scotia for their hackmatack knees. Many of the Oregon masts were 100 feet long and 30 inches in diameter.

As shipbuilding progressed the haphazard methods of earlier days gave way to a more methodical procedure. Greater attention was given to proportion and to lines. In order to make sure that the completed vessel was built on the desired lines a half model or mould of the hull was first made of the desired shape and proportion and from this model three plans were made: "the sheer," "the half-breadth," and "the body plan." The sheer was a plan of the ship's side, showing the length, depth, waterline, etc.; the half-breadth was a lengthwise section of half the ship, and the body plan a crosswise section of the vessel showing the lines of the bow and the stern. The mould, usually three or four feet long, was built of layers of soft wood, carefully worked to exact proportions. By means of a guage, outlines were made in chalk on the floor of the molding loft of every timber to be used in the vessel's construction. Following the outline of the chalk, patterns called "moulds" were made of pine boards carefully fastened together. Such moulds were especially necessary when the frames were "got out" in the woods of northern Maine or in Virginia.

Soon after one vessel was launched a crew with the moulds of the next to be built was sent into the woods of northern Maine or to Tar Bay on the James River in Virginia. Although the heavy growth of timber in northern Maine was much nearer than that in Virginia, Virginia was more accessible and less cumbered by deep snow in winter.

If a frame was to be got out in Virginia the men and the moulds were carried by schooner directly to Tar Bay. The moulds

and the equipment consisting of cross-cut saws, chests of tools, heavy grindstones, and camp dunnage had to be toted through the woods to the location where operations were to be carried on. The story is told that on one trip an especially heavy grindstone was assigned to two men who were not on speaking terms. They toiled over hill and down dale, across brooks and up steep banks, ready to drop from sheer exhaustion but, since they were not on speaking terms, neither could suggest to the other that they halt for a rest. Finally after trudging several miles one man broke the silence to ask, "Why don't you set it down?" To which the other replied, "Why don't you set it down?" Neither willing to give in, they continued to tote until the camp site was reached.

Before lumbering operations could begin a camp had to be set up and plans made for an orderly communal life. Two-story bunk houses must be built with sleeping accommodations on the upper floor because of the numerous lizards and snakes abounding in the region. Even then an occasional intruder would find its way in and drag its slimy body across a man's pillow. Then the welkin rang!

A camp kitchen had to be fitted up, too, and a cook installed. As on shipboard, no previous experience or special aptitude was considered essential in the choice of a person to carry on the important function of serving "three squares" a day. In the early eighties one Thomaston young man elected to serve in that capacity was chosen because of his weight. He was the "lightest" in the company. His first assignment was hot biscuits for supper. The lightweight champion had never made a biscuit in his life, but he had seen them made and he had sense enough to read the rule on the package of "Horsford's Bread Preparation" provided for his use. Unlike the young bride whose first biscuits tasted "funny" in spite of the liberal amount of baking powder she sprinkled on top of them, he followed the directions exactly and mixed the powder in. The results were so satisfactory that he was given the accolade for being "a born cook" and did not have a chance to wield an axe for the duration of the winter.

The domestic problems settled, the crew then tackled the job in hand. Taking the moulds in turn the master of the crew spotted a tree for each piece. Negroes were usually employed to



fell the trees and sometimes to "side" them, but the work of shaping the timbers was done by the crew. Each roughly hewn piece was marked and numbered so a check-up would show when every individual piece had been gotten out. After all parts of the frame were cut and shaped they were transported to Tar Bay and loaded on a waiting schooner for Thomaston. Camp was broken, bed-ticks emptied (sometimes cut in two if the cost had been divided), the equipment once more lifted to the men's backs and toted to the vessel for the voyage home. The winter's exile and absence of home comforts made even a dingy lumber schooner seem quite palatial and a return to Thomaston almost as promising as a trip to paradise.

The men who got out the ship's frame in those Virginia swamps had nothing to do with the getting out the masts and spars. There was a separate crew for that. The spar-makers usually went farther South to Georgia and South Carolina for the excellent white pine which they used in fashioning the superstructure without which the vessel would have been a helpless hulk. In the earliest days masts were usually a single "stick." As time went on the lower masts were built in four sections and hooped with strong iron bands. The masts made from Carolina and Georgia pine were "built masts."

Arrived in Thomaston and unloaded, each frame was ready for setting up in the particular yard for which it had been prepared. As soon as possible after arrival in the spring, work began on the new construction. First the keel, usually of live oak, was laid in a position from which the finished vessel could be most easily launched into the river. Then the stern post was securely fastened to the keel by a knee, after which the frame was set up. She was then ceiled and planked, her seams calked with oakum and smeared with tar, masts and bows set, decks laid and calked, the rudder built and hung in place. All of this to the tune of the whirring saw, the rub-a-dub-dub of the mallets, and the incense of the boiling tar. With the exception of the treenails (trunnels) every stroke of work on a wooden vessel was done by hand. The treenails, wooden pins or bolts for holding the frame together, were of locust and were finished by machine after being roughly

shaped by hand. The masts were set, yards, rigging, and sometimes the rudder put in place and sails "bent" after launching.

So adept were the men in the use of the broadaxe that they could follow a chalk line for twenty or thirty feet with almost as exact a precision as that of the surgeon whose lancet must not deviate by a hair's breadth. The story is told of the prowess of a lad who sought work in a New England ship yard many years ago. "Carrying on his shoulder his simple outfit of tools, a shipwright came barefooted one hot day to a yard looking for employment. The foreman tried his axes for balance and found them good, tried the edges and found them sharp. He decided on a test. Removing his white linen glove, his badge of office, he spread it on a log. Taking the man's broadaxe at long handle, he swung four full swings over his shoulder and placed four deep cuts between the fingers of the glove. If the barefoot man could do as well he might qualify. The barefoot man took the axe at long handle, put his bare foot on the log, and swung four deep cuts between his bare toes." Needless to say he got a job.

Every shipyard worker was a specialist in his own line. Men were trained to be plankers, ceilers, liners, calkers, dubbers, riggers and sailmakers from the first days of their apprenticeship, and they usually followed their special calling until they laid down their tools never to take them up again. Of course there were exceptions. Some men were so skillful that in a pinch they could turn their hand to almost any type of work. Although the old timers knew nothing of blue prints they knew how to build a vessel. When wooden shipbuilding was revived at the time of World War I, a generation of men had grown up who could read blue prints, but who knew nothing of shipbuilding. Old shipwrights, men long past their prime, were in great demand as advisers and consultants in every yard along the coast. In one instance, a man over eighty and too feeble to walk, was driven to a yard in a limousine and carried into the office like a baby that the modern workers might profit by his well-seasoned advice. He was paid war-time wages for his services, too.

Authorities on words peculiarly American claim the word *caucus* is a corruption of the word *calkers* and that possibly it origi-



nated in Boston's North End where the shipyards were. Different groups of workers had their clubs, that of the calkers being particularly influential. John Adams in his diary for 1763, makes note of a Caucus Club that met in the garret of one Tom Dawes. Since the usual meeting place for such organizations was a tavern, that particular club must have been a subversive one.

The steam box, in which long planks were made pliable for bending about the graceful bows or broad sterns, was a prominent feature of all shipyards. Barrels of tar from the southern pine barrens stood temptingly around. The workmen used this tar for pitching the seams of the vessels, while we children knew it as a predecessor of Wrigley's. Fragrant pine chips were everywhere. On a warm summer afternoon it was a pleasant sensation to walk near enough to the yards to see the bustle and stir and inhale the shipyard odors mingled with and tempered by the tang of the salt sea air, or to sit languorously in the shady yard at home or on the shore around Brown's Point where the hum and whir were softened almost to a lullaby. How soothing it was!

"Tending the steam-box" was supposed to be a boy's job. It was his duty to see that the fire that made the steam did not die down. In the early days chips were used for fuel. There were always several boys clamoring for the job, and the writer's father, thoroughly engrossed in his own plans, had been known to absent-mindedly give the position to more than one. When it was about time to start the thing going, his good wife used to remind him, "Now be sure you hire only *one* boy for the steam box. It is too bad to disappoint a boy." While keeping up steam in the steam box was a boy's job, the operation of the box was a man-sized job. It took the strength of near giants to put some of the heavy, rigid planks into the long, dark, scalding-hot chamber, and something akin to martyrdom to pull them out while sizzling hot and reeking molten pitch, shoulder them, and carry them to their allotted niche in the ship's frame. Sometimes the men's shoulders were terribly blistered. Derricks did not come to the shipyards until a comparatively late day.

It is probably true that there are slackers in industry and that there are a few spineless individuals who prefer a dole to wages, but the surprising thing is that for untold ages men have been

and still are breaking their bodies over tasks that are almost superhuman, sometimes dangerous and oftentimes revolting. Certainly "the labourer is worthy of his hire." Why should he have to beg for a living wage? In the shipyards in the early days men worked from daylight until dark, as long as they could see a chalk-line. Later the day was fixed at ten hours, from 6 A.M. till 5 P.M., with one hour off for dinner. Two dollars a day was *good* pay. Chapman, of Chapman and Flint, when a young man worked all day on the side of a ship as a calker, receiving as pay one bushel of corn which he had to carry three miles to a mill to be ground.

As soon as operations started in the yard, work began in the cabinet-makers' shops that the houses might have an appropriate interior. Fine woods, usually mahogany or rosewood, beautifully finished, made up the trim of the captain's quarters. It seemed as though in that respect each vessel in some way outdid every other one that had gone before. Meanwhile the sail-lofts, too, were busy, that the quota of canvas might be in readiness when the time for it arrived. Protected by "palms," sailmakers' thimbles, men bent over unending yards of canvas in the roomy sail-lofts fashioning sails, the seams of which had to hold fast against the weight of winters ice and sleet, match their strength against the force of the tropical hurricane, and withstand, perhaps the most insidious foe of all, the slow disintegration following prolonged seasons of soggy weather. If rope and sails had a chance to dry out and spring back into shape again their vitality was assured; not given that chance, continual slackness ended in actual rotting. *Lignum-vitae*, a very hard wood, usually called "linkum-vity," was fashioned into blocks for hoisting tackle. In paint shops men ground lead and with oil mixed paints that no part of the ship's structure might be unnecessarily exposed to wind and wave. Last but not least boat builders constructed the boats that were to swing from the ship's davits, ready for any emergency. Sometimes the boats were washed away during a gale; sometimes it was the boats that buffeted the heavy seas for days after the vessel had sunk beneath the waves.

In sooty blacksmith shops men toiled and sweated, as have the smiths of all time that the vessel might be properly "ironed." In the earliest days of ship building in this country little iron was



used. It was not easily available and it was expensive. As time went on and iron became cheaper, quantities of it were used. Its application was known as the "ironing." For years the ironing of a vessel was done wholly by hand.

At what would now be considered "tender years" boys became apprentices in that age-old craft. Oliver Mathews, son of a wizard in iron, and a grandson of the redoubtable Cap'n Simon Shibbles, began his career at fifteen. Although his father, a Thomaston man, was an outstanding craftsman, Oliver chose to serve his apprenticeship in a Portland shipyard where the "Yankee Cheese Box," the *Monitor*, was being built. When the little spit-fire put the *Merrimac* out of the running Oliver and his co-workers indulged in a well earned celebration. Of all the good folk who threw their caps in the air because of that feat none had a better right than those shipyard men who had armored the contraption. In addition to making possible an ultimate Union victory, the success of the encounter revolutionized naval warfare the world over. From that day wooden battleships became obsolete. Shortly after the close of the Civil War Mathews returned to Thomaston where he expected to follow his calling the rest of his life. Fate decided otherwise. Failing health overtook him and he was obliged to retire from active work in Morse's boat yard at the age of ninety! During the seventy-five years he spent at his forge, he handled tons and tons of iron. He ironed so many ships and other craft that he lost count of their number. The seeker for the Fountain of Youth may find here the answer to his search. The writer's advice would be, however, begin early and go slowly.

Everybody in town followed the progress of each vessel with great interest. All knew when the keel was laid, when the frame was up, when she was ceiled and planked, when she was calked, when the masts were set, when she was rigged, when the water line was drawn and the painters were at work.

To be sure the men did the actual work, but behind the lines were the women and children, each helping directly or indirectly to bring the vessel to completion. Boys tended the steam-box, girls carried their father's dinners to the shipyard, wives and mothers cooked and washed and sewed to feed and clothe the

men who were working so feverishly from sun to sun. Captain's wives and sweethearts anxiously awaited the day when the vessel would be finished and ready to sail. If the maiden voyage were to be a honeymoon voyage the whole town breathed one great lover's sigh. To the seasoned sea-faring woman it meant either temporary separation from her husband with its accompanying care and worry or another jaunt to another port. Sailor lads and their lasses were on tip-toe, too. A boy facing his first voyage at sea was as completely thrilled as the master's bride, and his eyes as full of light. So whether we worked or whether we waited our hearts were always set on a ship.

As the day of launching (pronounced "larnching") drew near everybody was on the qui vive. In the yard all was abustle and astir for the vessel had to be greased up the day she was to be sent down the ways. In olden times all sorts of grease, even goose grease mixed with flaxseed was sometimes used. In the writer's day rancid lard, tallow, pogy oil, soft soap, hard soap, seal blubber, and "New York launching grease" were used. Whatever it was, it had to be put on without stint and the ways had to be so very slick and slippery that when the blocks and wedges were knocked out the vessel would glide smoothly into the water.

The launching always took place at flood tide and about noon. In those good old days anybody who wished could launch aboard. We children would climb the long inclined staging leading from the ground to a point opposite the vessel's rail about midships. That was comparatively easy; but when we reached the narrow plank bridging the gap between the staging and the rail, although there was always a friendly hand outstretched to us, our knees trembled, our legs grew limp and our purpose faltered. Only by keeping our eyes fixed on the rail and mustering all the courage at our command could we take the final steps that put us aboard.

The writer does not know which was the more thrilling: to launch aboard or to stand on the shore and watch the vessel glide into the water. Whether the sensation was one of sight or feeling, it was sublime! The tense throng, the curt commands, the concerted action of the men, the frenzied knocking out of



the blocks, the sudden quiver of the ship's whole frame as if the breath of life had been breathed into her, and a movement that seemed to say "when 't is done, then 't were well

It were done quickly",

and with one majestic plunge, she was in the foaming waves. Whistles blew, shouts and cheers rent the air. Proudly riding the churning waters which enfolded and caressed her, she seemed like some animate thing. And, indeed, she was something more than a hulk of wood and of iron; for had not the thoughts and the plans, indeed the very lives of dozens of men gone into the making of her graceful frame?

As soon as she took to the water, there was a brief pause, then all again was bustle and excitement. Boats were shoved off to pick up all the apparatus carried into the water with her. Haw-sers were thrown out and after much manoeuvring and apparent cajoling, not unlike the catching of a spirited colt that has had a taste of freedom, the ship was swung round and tied up to the wharf. A gang plank was thrown out and, if we had launched aboard, we were free to go ashore.

Vessels were always launched stern first, the bow high in the air. When they went down the river for their maiden voyage the writer noticed they went bow first and wondered why. It was some years before she learned that that was the way they were made to sail. To this day, however, when she looks at a picture of a moving vessel, she invariably has to reverse her first impression of the direction in which the vessel is sailing.

From time immemorial ship launchings have been the occasion of significant ceremonies. Gods always had to be appeased. When the Greek, and later Roman galleys were launched, altars were raised at the water's edge where priests conducted an elaborate ritual consisting of prayers, blessings and the symbolic use of holy water. Wine being more potent than water, the use of that beverage gradually crept into the pagan ceremonies, probably on the assumption that the sea-god, Neptune, might be more easily appeased by something other than the element with which he was so familiar. Neither water nor wine would satisfy the blood-thirsty Norse gods, so the fierce Norsemen tied a human victim to the ways or rollers over which their vessels slid into the

water. As a possible survival of this Norse custom it was long the practice in France, which was largely settled by Norsemen, to give galley-slaves an opportunity to volunteer to knock out the last block which shored the vessel up, with the understanding that freedom was his if he miraculously escaped with his life. To show their sincerity a pit was dug for the man to drop into as soon as the final blow was struck. So quickly did the vessel move, however, that usually the service became a bloody sacrifice.

Despite all this precedent there was comparatively little or no ceremony connected with a Thomaston launching. Of course all vessels were named, and although Cyrus Eaton notes that at the launching of the Brig *Homer* in 1841, "a bottle of good *water*, for the first time on Georges River, it is said, was thrown with the usual ceremonies instead of a bottle of spirits," a formal christening was not customary. I think it would have offended the puritanical instincts of many of our staunch early forebears on the Georges to have used any medium whether water or wine for any such purpose. It would have savored too much of "popery." The baptism of the waves was sufficient ceremony for them. The application of spirits to other uses was a wholly different matter, one of practice, not of principle. From time immemorial house raisings, barn raisings and church raisings had all been expedited by copious draughts from "the little brown jug," and there were always enough convivial souls in a ship yard on launching day to see that the custom did not die out. A treat was expected and was provided regardless of the builder's orthodoxy in regard to christening his vessel, or his personal convictions as to what constituted a celebration. In later years when outside interests owned the commanding part of many of the vessels the names were formally bestowed to the tune of broken glass and gurgling champagne.

Vessels were often named for owners, for wives and for sons and daughters, especially in the latter days when romance had begun to die. In the earlier times such unsophisticated names as Three Brothers, Four Brothers, Seven Brothers, Olive Branch, Fair Play, Good Intent, Dime, Young Mechanic; such appropriate names as Dolphin, Curlew, Swallow, Eagle, Sea-Gull, Swan, Race-hound, Kingfisher, Newsboy, Pathfinder, Ocean Chief or such



bombastic ones as Belvidere, Zoroaster, Leonidas, Miltiades, Talleyrand, and Charlemagne were bestowed upon these beautiful winged creatures. One curious thing was that no matter whether the name was Seven Brothers, Newsboy or Charlemagne the sex was the same, the ship was always a "She."

Anne Johnson Robinson has written a charming poem apropos of the latter group of names:

"In '51 the brigantines in stately majesty,  
Black hulled, with straining sheets, sailed out to battle with the sea;  
The Hancock to New Orleans, Leonidas to France  
With sugar, fruit and cotton and a ballast of romance!  
Miltiades and Talleyrand, Eclipse and Charlemagne  
Lifted to greener seas than ours, fought blacker hurricane;  
For on the list of every crew, from China to Penzance,  
Was the flaunting name Adventure and his pirate brother, Chance.

As a rule the vessels were never fully rigged until after the launching. It would have made them top-heavy. The writer's mother used to tell of one of her father's vessels that was rigged before being launched and it tipped over before it reached the water. An eye-witness to the disaster said the accident was not wholly due to that fact, but from a custom the young men of that day practiced of rocking a ship by rushing from one side of the deck to the other as soon as it left the ways. The vessel was righted, and fortunately no one was drowned or injured. Until 1863, when Capt. Charles E. Ranlett used wire for the rigging of the barque *Sunbeam*, Thomaston vessels had always been hemp rigged. The coppering of a vessel was often done in dry dock in some distant port, frequently as far away as Liverpool. This was a necessary procedure. It prevented accumulation of barnacles on the ship's bottom. From time to time vessels had to be put in dry dock and have their bottoms scraped. One sea captain's good wife refused to have a vessel named for her because she didn't want to be humiliated by the frequent newspaper announcement, "The Susan — is up having her bottom scraped."

Sometimes at launching vessels would make a good headway and then stick to the ways before reaching the water. In that event there was nothing to do but wait for the high tide next

day. If there was a high course of tides the vessel sometimes would finish her launching without much assistance. The story is told of one vessel that stuck to the ways for several days. Every effort had been made to move her, but she wouldn't budge. Sunday came. Still she was on the ways. One of the deacons sitting in church, had let his eyes wander. Instead of fixing them on the minister, he was speculating about the vessel whose masts he could see from his pew. Suddenly, to the astonishment of all there assembled he stood up and shouted, "There she goes!"

In 1880, the *Freeda Willey* moved only twenty feet at launching time. The owners decided not to wait more than twenty-four hours for time and tide. They secured a steamer, attached stout hawsers to the temperamental boat, applied battering rams, and ingloriously pushed her into the water.

Another time a vessel belonging to the Hon. Edward O'Brien stuck on the ways and would not budge. A prominent Rockland man standing beside O'Brien asked, "Now, what are you going to do, Mr. O'Brien?" "Let her stay there and build another" was the quick rejoinder. "There is no one in Rockland who can do that!"

In the Bath shipyards the writer has been told there was once upon a time a builder who expedited his launchings by a liberal use of profanity. One launching day his partner, named Sawyer, a very religious man, appeared upon the scene accompanied by personal friends, just as the vessel slid down the ways and the torrent of oaths had reached its climax. Later at luncheon, the unabashed member of the firm remarked to the guests, "Gentlemen, I don't suppose you think much of me, but I'll tell you how 't is. I do all the swearing and Sawyer does all the praying and we don't either of us mean anything by it."

A shipyard was a boy's paradise. If he wanted something to do or if he simply wanted to indulge in his prerogative as an on-looker there was always something to do and plenty to see. One Thomaston lad whose father was a master builder, used to haunt the yard. As soon as school was out he would betake himself to the yard where he would borrow tools from one man's chest until he was caught and driven off. Then he would proceed to another and to another until it was time to quit work and the



chests were locked up. When his father went to Bath with Chapman and Flint, Sidney, of course, went along, too. At the age of fourteen he became an accredited assistant. He served his apprenticeship in various lines, but eventually became a launching expert. From Bath he went to the New London shipyards, then to Fore River at Quincy where he was launching superintendent. Among the many vessels he helped slide down the ways was the 20,000 ton Argentinian battleship *Rivadavia*, which "rolled slick as a button." In his long experience he directed one hundred sixty-six launchings, every one without a hitch.

In the early days vessels launched at the Crick were pulled down stream by oxen just as canal boats were drawn by horses in the days of the old Erie Canal. Probably the same method was used at Oyster River, too. Those built up-stream in Warren were "warped" down the river, that is, ropes attached to the vessel were fastened to a series of trees or stakes driven into the bank on both sides of the river and the vessel pulled and guided on its way. Men and boys walked along the banks making fast and casting off, and fastening lines farther and farther ahead. Some of the ships drew so much water they had to be lightened by fastening hogsheads at the bilge line so they would float through the shoals below Warren village and through the rapids at the Narrows in Thomaston. The men started work at the first streak of dawn, getting in hours before breakfast. They stopped only long enough to eat. It took a number of high tides to "warp" a vessel down to deeper water. Ships of over 1,000 tons were moved in that way.

Fortunately or unfortunately, shipbuilding in Warren had ceased by the time the railroad bridge came to bar the right of way. Vessels built at Thomaston in later years were usually towed down river by steam tugs. An amusing incident happened when the *Alfred D. Snow* set forth on her maiden voyage. She was towed as far as Monhegan, when the tug boat left her. A heavy fog having set in it was necessary to blow a fog horn, but none had been installed. Fortunately, Alfred Sampson, the ship's carpenter, had a cornet. He was ordered to blow that and, the fog persisting, he had to keep it up all night. The earliest tug or tow-boat was a large open row-boat manned by several oarsmen.

The departure of a vessel was sometimes celebrated by festivities aboard ship, the gay party staying on board until the tug left her to proceed under her own power. The *J. B. Walker*, one of the O'Brien fleet, was launched in September, 1879. Her length of keel was 236 feet, she was 260 feet over all, and 2200 tons burthen. She was the largest ship ever built on the river up to 1879. People came from far and near to witness the launching. There were between three and four thousand people in the streets and at every point of vantage from which a glimpse of her could be secured. After she was put in sea-going condition she was towed down the river and sailed for New York where she chartered oil for Liverpool. Besides her officers, carpenter, and steward, she carried a crew of nineteen men and seven boys. On her initial trip down stream she carried a party of guests as far as Monhegan. A contemporary paper says that "at 9:30 A.M. of the appointed day she was unmoored from the wharf; at 12 M. she made sail, set spanker, main-topmost sail, also fore-topmast-stay-sail, jib, flying-jib and outer-jib, and majestically glided down the river whose waters were like glass, with hardly breeze enough to curl its surface and the warm sun smiling gently upon it." A banquet was served to the guests on board who parted company with her at Monhegan at 3:30 P.M. From there she proceeded under her own sail, her hull and sail disappearing below the horizon at 5:30 P.M.

"Those were days to be remembered, when  
our good ship sailed away."

The *Edward O'Brien*, another of the O'Brien fleet, was launched in October 1882. She was larger than the *J. B. Walker*, her length over all being 275 feet and she had a 90 foot main mast. It has been claimed she had the longest keel of any wooden ship ever built, excepting the *Great Republic*. She was coppered in Liverpool. She drew the largest crowd ever assembled in Thomaston up to that time to witness a launching. Early in the morning teams began to arrive and people started to pour into town from all directions. The day was beautiful, the air almost as balmy as June. The vessel took to the water about noon. The writer can see her now as she slid down the ways. It was truly



one of the most impressive sights she ever beheld. Another eyewitness wrote at the time, "one has to see a noble ship launch to know fully the grandeur of the scene. It is difficult to describe the majesty of the same." So eager was the vessel to take to the waves that she dragged a 4200 lb. anchor through the hillside above her, cutting a furrow five feet deep and tearing down many small trees!

One of the most pathetic things in connection with these ships was the fact that so few of them ever came back. The *Belle O'Brien*, the eightieth in the O'Brien fleet, was one of the few ships built on the river ever to return. She came back from Liverpool in 1882 to bring three iron masts, six iron yards and other rigging for the ship *Edward O'Brien* which was built that year. Schooners came back occasionally, however, if their ownership was retained in Thomaston and if—the big "IF"—they did not meet an untimely end.

Mr. O'Brien, owner of the O'Brien yards, died in the spring of 1882. The writer distinctly remembers the day of the funeral as her father was one of the many mourners who marched in the cortege. Thomaston was in mourning. The town had lost her "grand old man." A vessel floating in a sea of smilax with white-capped waves, a vessel whose hull was not of pine and whose sails were not of canvas, but of carnations; whose deck was not of plank, but of roses; whose masts were not of steel, but of English violets; with a flag at the masthead bearing the name *Edward O'Brien*, convoyed him to his last resting place. Shortly after, a granite monument bearing a life-size statue was erected over the spot. We children awaited its unveiling with a great deal of interest because it was the first monument of its kind we had ever seen.

O'Brien, a native of Warren, but long a resident of Thomaston, was the largest individual ship owner in the United States and it is claimed the fourteenth citizen of the country to attain the distinction of becoming a millionaire. At the time of his death his estate was rated at \$2,000,000. With the exception of shares in the *J. B. Walker* which he gave his family physician for whom it was named, he was the sole owner of the O'Brien fleet. In his long career he modeled, built (was his own master-

builder until 1839) and owned eighty-one vessels. When eighty years old he designed improvements in the model of his ship and made out a schedule to send South for 600,000 feet of lumber. He established the Georges National Bank and had a large balance with Baring Brothers, London. It was he who secured telegraphic communication for Thomaston in 1848.

With the passing of the ships, one romantic feature of vessel construction passed, too. I refer to the use of a figurehead. All the older vessels had them. The writer's father used to modestly acknowledge that he had carved one when the regular artist, Harvey Counce, was sick and there was nobody else to do it. Her mother always insisted it was a fine piece of work and that the other craftsman hurriedly got well when he found he might have a possible rival.

The use of a figurehead is as old as recorded history. The early Norse navigators sought to terrify the "Old Man of the Sea" and other denizens of the deep by placing figureheads of fierce dragons or menacing warriors at the bows of their vessels. The Chinese put eyes at the bows of their junks so they could see where they were going; for, "No can see, no can go." The down-east Yankee put a figurehead at the bow of his vessel because it was the decent and traditional thing to do. A dignified captain of a ship would as soon have appeared on the street minus collar and necktie or have ignored the waterline on his vessel as to put out to sea without a figurehead. She simply was not shipshape without it. A suitable figurehead under the bow of the vessel gave every last man aboard a feeling of security. With its gaze fixed directly ahead, never turning to right or left, no matter how great the whistle of the wind or how loud the creaking of the tackle, it seemed to be the very embodiment of that steadfastness of purpose so necessary in the life of a sailor.

American captains, as a whole, took great pride in the appearance of their vessels. Everything aboard ship was kept as spick and span, as smooth and polished as paint, varnish and elbow grease could make it. The figurehead was the darling of many a skipper's heart. The decoration and redecoration of such figures cost as much as an outfit for the good wife—and in many instances probably the good wife came in second. Her position



was less conspicuous. In one of his stories Conrad tells of a skipper who was bemoaning the loss of his figurehead. A solicitous friend, not realizing the depth of the old salt's attachment, suggested that after all he could get another one, to which the mourner replied, "A new figurehead! Why, I've been a widower for eight and twenty years come next May, and I would as soon think of getting a new wife!"

Figureheads were discarded, however, and replaced by others when the vessel's name was changed which was done frequently. The chief point to a figurehead, aside from its decoration, was its symbolism. A vessel named *Andrew Jackson* might be a "she," but it would have been nothing short of scandalous for her to carry under her bow the figure of a woman. Men who could execute a satisfactory figure named their own price. As competition increased this expensive bit of artistry was abandoned. The schooners, although many had fine lines, especially about the bow, had no ornamentation there other than a billet head or a very modest scroll.

Year after year the busy folk on the Georges continued to ship their lumber or convert it into vessels. With the exception of the 500-ton ship *Holofernes* built in 1809, the vessels whether sloops, schooners or brigs, ranged in size from 45 to 333 tons. By sad experience it had been learned that the larger craft were not so practical for sailing in uncharted bays and rivers. Even though vessels engaged in the "Boston-Northwest-West-Coast-Canton Boston" route were for months on the high seas and the voyage took them round the Horn, the smaller ship was a great advantage and much less likely to lead to disaster on an unknown shore. When it came to speed smaller size was an important factor, too, as proven by the privateers and slave runners of that and earlier days. They rarely exceeded 200 tons.

Instead of emphasis on size, improvement in line was stressed. While carrying capacity was a vessel's chief excuse for being, ability to get there safely and in the shortest possible time was an important requisite. Time was money and the same speed which shortened the voyage might also mean escape from a piratical pursuer. Lines were constantly refined and sailing qualities bettered by the true and tried method of putting into practice

every new feature which had proven itself commendable. Since many of the early ship-builders were also their own ship-masters they were highly qualified to judge the sailing qualities of any given model.

In 1832 the whole maritime world rubbed its eyes and stared at a new creature which was constructed on the Chesapeake, the first clipper, the *Ann McKim*. For three years, by outsailing everything afloat, that paragon of the seas held shipping circles entranced. She was at once the admiration and the despair of ship-builders and ship-masters everywhere. Her coming tallied almost exactly with a great ship-building revival in which Maine, according to Samuel Eliot Morison, "overtook her parent Massachusetts, the great shipyards of the Sewalls and others on the Kennebec, the Georges, and the Penobscot became serious competitors of the Mystic and the Merrimac and small coasting vessels were constructed all along the spruce-rimmed shore."

Although lines were shaded and refined here and there no immediate attempt was made to copy *Ann* even by her own builders. She had been built primarily for speed and no expense had been spared. Since capacity as well as speed were essential in any vessel, the former could not be entirely overlooked and the cost of construction and upkeep most certainly had to be considered. Then, too, while clipping clipped hours and days off a record, at the same time it clipped years off a ship's life. Fast sailing like fast living took its toll and some of the clippers after a comparatively few voyages were almost physical wrecks, worn out by the stress of their towering, rakishly set masts, and the strain of their billowing canvas.

While the cautious Yankee builders in Thomaston looked on and applauded they conservatively stuck to their own ideas and built vessels for average speed, for any type of cargo, and for adaptability to any waters where chances were good and freights high. Although some of the ships were sold, many were locally owned.

Through the Thirties and for several years in the Forties an average of eight vessels a year were built in Thomaston, which then included Rockland and South Thomaston. In the fall of 1844, 3309 tons of new shipping valued at \$200,000 and manned



by 135 persons sailed down the river. That was the start of a great ship building boom. Twenty-three vessels being built in 1845, twenty-one in 1846, twenty-one in 1847, chiefly for the cotton trade to Europe. The timber was brought from the South. In 1848, although twenty-five vessels were built in the same yards they did not all redound to Thomaston's credit, for that year East Thomaston concluded she had grown up and was able to paddle her own canoe, so she left the parental roof, and amoeba-like divided herself into two parts. The northern section was incorporated into the town of Rockland and the southern, South Thomaston.

If one were looking for freight there never was a more opportune time for building vessels than 1848. When the cry of "Gold!" rent the air and stirred the imagination of the civilized world there was a fleet of staunch vessels ready for the race around the Horn. The feverish excitement of those days is recorded in history and tradition, and the great demand for vessels and more vessels to carry the half-crazed gold seekers to the new Eldorado. Some hardy adventurers who had more faith in their feet than in their stomachs started out overland. Others shipped to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed that strip of land which looks so narrow on the map, to the Pacific side, re-embarking there for the gold fields. Many others philosophically concluded the longest way round was the shortest way, and took passage on a Cape-Horner. Some groups chartered vessels, others bought vessels outright knowing well they could fill them to capacity with passengers.

Capt. Charles E. Ranlett in his diary for March, 1852 wrote: "A Thomaston barque has just been sold in New York for \$26,000. The man who bought the barque made a very fine business of her; he laid her on for California and she was filled with passengers in less than a week, the rate of passage being from \$160 to \$200. She made about \$50,000 freight and passage money. The owner could have paid for her with the passage money, but he bought a ship with that and now has her for California."

With "California! Gold!! California! Gold!!" ringing in their ears the ship builders feverishly laid down the keel of ship after ship, racing them to completion, sliding them down the ways, and giving them Godspeed as they disappeared down the river to wing their way to the golden coast. *Pook*, the ship architect,

was called in, models were refined with an eye to greater speed; and size was increased. It is claimed that "Chapman and Flint were the first to build an elliptical stern which generally superseded the round stern throughout the world."

Instead of brigs, barques, and an occasional ship, the ship now took the lead over other forms of construction and the size increased up to 1700 tons. At this time Capt. Ranlett wrote in his diary: "Clippers are all the rage and shippers will not look at anything else." In 1851 J. and C. C. Morton built the clipper *Racehound*, in '52 the *Hyperion* (rechristened the *Golden Racer*), in '53 the *Ocean Chief*. That year Chapman and Flint enticed John McDonald from the McKay yards to build the *Oracle* for Capt. Ranlett. The following year the *Crest of the Wave* was built at Oyster River. All were true clippers with accredited records. A clipper bark, much smaller than the foregoing, the *Newsboy*, 300 tons, was built at South Thomaston the same year. All were sold almost immediately, with the exception of the *Oracle* which was owned and navigated by citizens of the place.

No data is available for the *Racehound*, but the accomplishments of the others are a matter of record. The *Golden Racer*, 838 tons, went down the ways in the Morton yard as the *Hyperion*. She was sold and re-christened the *Golden Racer* because she was to race to California's golden coast. On her maiden trip from Thomaston to Boston where she was to load for San Francisco she made an exceptionally quick passage. Sailing from Boston the latter part of January, 1853, she logged "35 days to the line, 21 days to 50° South, 19 days rounding the Horn, 22 days to the equator, which was crossed on the 96th day out"; then, held up by very light winds "was 34 days to destination, being 100 miles from destination four days before her arrival . . . From San Francisco she was 53 days to Callao; loaded guano at Chincha Islands; left Callao, October 11, and was 80 days to Hampton Roads." On her second voyage she met with difficulties rounding the Horn and faced light winds up the Pacific, being becalmed 18 days in 19° South, so that part of her trip was no record run; but in crossing the Pacific from San Francisco to Shanghai she made the passage in forty-three days. She was later



stranded in the River Min under what looked like dubious circumstances from the present-day vantage point as, at the time of the disaster, she was not loaded and was fully insured.

The *Oracle*, a true clipper, 1200 tons, Capt. Ranlett, was designed by *Pook* and built by Chapman and Flint in Thomaston in 1853. On her maiden voyage she sailed from Thomaston to Mobile presumably to load cotton for Liverpool. From Liverpool she embarked with three hundred passengers for Melbourne, Australia. As in modern passenger vessels, the accommodations were divided into first, second and third class and steerage. Because of the large number of passengers the law required the captain to carry a surgeon. The usual medical supplies had been provided, including wine, brandy, etc., which were listed as "medical comforts." These supplies were put under lock and key and the key delivered to the surgeon. The first day out a passenger required medical attention. When summoned the surgeon was found to have made himself so comfortable with the "medical comforts" at his disposal that the captain had to substitute for him. Falling a second time, after an extension of grace, he was finally deposed altogether and the master took over his duties for the remainder of the voyage.

From Melbourne the *Oracle* went to Shanghai. The Taiping Rebellion had been going on five years. (It continued nine more.) At the particular time of the *Oracle's* visit the city was being bombarded by the French. Capt. Ranlett narrowly escaped a cannon ball while sleeping ashore one night, but other than that he experienced no insurmountable difficulties.

Loaded with tea and seventy-five tons of silk the *Oracle* sailed from Shanghai Jan. 7, 1855, touched at Anjer, Java, Jan. 26, reaching London May 9. On this passage Capt. Ranlett logged 360 miles in one day, the record run of his career. The stop at Anjer was made to lay in a supply of fruit, cocoanuts, vegetables, chickens and hogs, all of which were a most welcome addition to the limited menu aboard ship. In his diary Capt. Ranlett mentions the custard-apple as being especially delicious. While everything was "dirt cheap" to buy, occasionally one paid dearly for eating the fruit which often harbored germs of the deadly Asiatic cholera.

At London Capt. Ranlett was joined by his wife and daughter, Alice, who made the voyage with him from London to Bombay with a general cargo. The *Oracle* was sold to a British firm in 1862 and it is believed her name was changed to *Young England*. She bore a figurehead.

The *Ocean Chief*, 1229 tons, was launched in 1853. The Thomaston "Sickle" published the following item: "The beautiful ship *Ocean Chief* was yesterday launched from the ship yard of Messers J. and C. C. Morton in this town. This ship is one of the handsomest modelled ships, we think, ever launched on the river. She is built for freight, and yet for speed, a beautiful and gallant craft. The *Ocean Chief* is about 1228 tons, and it is the general report about town this morning that she has been sold to an English house for \$85,000 cash. Whether the rumor is true or not is no matter, for if she is not sold now she will sell for all her owners, the Messers Morton will ask for her."

Dame Rumor was premature but right. According to a later news item: "She was built for the New York market, but owing to the market being flooded, Capt. Sanders Curling was given full command and power of attorney to sell her. He took her to New Orleans, chartered her to Liverpool with a cargo of flour and cotton. In the winter of 1854 he sold her to a Liverpool house (James Baines & Co.) for a packet for the Australian Black Ball line for \$86,000, realizing for the owners a handsome sum, including the freight. She made four passages from Liverpool to Australia in 83 days each, varying only by a few hours in each passage. The *Ocean Chief* was a fast sailer and a favorite. Passengers would wait for her in preference to the regular steamship line as she repeatedly made quicker passages. It may well be said that J. and C. C. Morton gained for themselves and the Eastern vessels a reputation in that of the "*Ocean Chief*." It is an unquestioned fact that Thomaston vessels rank high. While in Australia, ready for sea, she took fire and was burned to the water's edge. It is thought she was burned by the sailors."

The *Ocean Chief* was designed by Samuel H. Pook who had drawn the plans for the *Red Jacket* and many other swift clippers with which the *Ocean Chief* fully ranked. She was in every way a beautiful ship." Other records claim the *Ocean Chief*



made her first passage from "Liverpool to Hobart Town in 72 days, the fastest on record at that time. On the return she was 84 days from Sydney to Liverpool. The two following outward passages were from Liverpool to Melbourne and were made in 80 and 75 days respectively. Thereafter she made a consistently good record." Her model was exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

The *Crest of the Wave*, by some authorities accredited to Thomaston, was really built on the Warren side of Oyster River in 1854. She was 175 feet long and measured 942 tons. If she were not a true clipper she was at least near enough to one to find a purchaser in the Baltimore market, the cradle of clippers. It is not likely her owners, conversant as they must have been with clipper models, bought an "ugly duckling."

The *Crest of the Wave* was a Cape-Horner, making trips from New York to San Francisco and Puget Sound and, as did most of the ships of that day, included Liverpool in her itinerary. On all her voyages she made records that put her in the clipper class. Notwithstanding her rating, she had an unfortunate career. On one passage, when off the western coast of South America, the mate, the captain's wife, and thirteen of the crew died of yellow fever.

At the time of the Civil War she was seized as rebel property and resold in the North. Being Yankee-built that was no disgrace. She resumed her business of clipping as though nothing had happened. Finally real disaster overtook her. In March, 1870, en route from Liverpool to Baltimore with salt she ran into foul weather off Cape Charles. What happened nobody knows as not a soul lived to tell the tale. Two of her boats containing several bodies, one that of her thirty-two year old master, were washed ashore, followed later by her flag and a portion of her quarter-board bearing her name. Under such circumstances a vessel was said to be "lost." She was "missing, probably lost," if long overdue or never reported.

The *Newsboy*, a brig of 300 tons, built at South Thomaston in 1854, became a Mediterranean fruit clipper. Samuel Eliot Morison says "Baltimore clipper brigs and schooners were first used by Mediterranean merchants to get their fruit to market in good

season. By 1830 Massachusetts builders had created a type of deep, sharp brig with a rakish rig, which produced as much speed as the Chesapeake type and carried more cargo. Among the famous fruiterers were the *Water Witch*, *Newsboy*, *Sea Mew* and *Red Rover*. After bringing home grapes and oranges for Thanksgiving and Christmas, they would make a winter voyage to Rio de Janeiro or the West Indies."

Rockland, once Thomaston's "Shore Village," built in 1853-'54 the famous *Red Jacket*, which established a new maritime record on her maiden voyage from Sandy Hook to Liverpool through vicious North Atlantic weather, in 13 days and 1 hour, logging 413 nautical miles in one day. Under charter to the White Star Line she made a passage from Liverpool to Melbourne in 69 days and 11 hours, and back to Liverpool with a cargo of gold dust and sovereigns in 73 days. On the outward passage she averaged 202¼ miles a day; making a spurt of 400 miles one day. She made these achievements under the Stars and Stripes. At the conclusion of her trip she was purchased by her charterers. Change of flag did not alter her behavior. She held her own consistently. The *Red Jacket* was almost twice the size of the Thomaston clippers. She was 260 feet long, registered 2006 tons and, with the exception of the *Great Republic*, was approximately the same size as the Donald McKay clippers. In fact the McKay clipper, the *Lightning*, which established an all time record of 436 miles in twenty-four hours' sailing time was not so long by seventeen feet and exceeded the *Red Jacket's* tonnage by only seventy-six tons. Several other ships of 2000 and more tons were built in the Rockland yards, but none attained the *Red Jacket's* distinction.

In 1856 ship building was still flourishing in Thomaston. A brig, a barque and eight ships ranging from 1048 to 1342 tons were built, giving employment to 1500 men.

Naturally ship building declined in Thomaston as it did elsewhere during the four trying years of the Civil War, but it did not die out altogether. In 1861 the only craft built in Thomaston was the gunboat *Kennebec* for the good old U. S. A. In 1862, two vessels were built and, in keeping with the times, one was named *Gen. McLellan*. In 1863 the number was increased to seven, and



one, in addition to flaunting the Stars and Stripes defiantly wore on her stern a name that all pursuing southern raiders might read as they ran, *E Pluribus Unum!* In 1864 two schooners, a barque and a ship were built.

In 1865 ship building activities came to a temporary halt, but when the warring forces laid down their arms, in keeping with the Reconstruction Period, shipbuilding revived. A maritime authority says, "It was Maine that kept the flag afloat at the spanker gaff of sailing ships," at that time. But, sorry to say, the beautiful clipper was gradually displaced. She had been an exotic thing, an incarnation of beauty and of speed. While "beauty is its own excuse for being" utility must be catered to. In the clipper so much roominess had to be sacrificed to speed that they were not practical for heavy, drab, every-day cargoes. They could make money and clip records at the same time when carrying valuable light cargoes such as tea, silk, and spices. Wheat, guano, coal, pig-iron, machinery, and steel rails called for elbow-room and greater capacity. Speed was not to be flouted, but it became secondary. Schooners with their fore-and-aft rigging and their roomier hulls were the answer to the problem. In Thomaston ships were still occasionally launched during the Seventies and Eighties, but schooners were outnumbering them.

An English paper of the year 1874 contained the following article: "Several three-masted schooners arrived in Liverpool after the remarkably quick passage of sixteen or eighteen days. All carried full cargoes of deals (boards cut to specified sizes). These vessels are being built in the States in increasing numbers and size, from which we conclude that this particular rig has some special advantages, among them the saving of the cost of construction and also in sailing, requiring as they do, a smaller crew than a square-rigged vessel of the same size." Tradition has it that the name "schooner" was bestowed upon this class of vessel when excited spectators at the launching of the first of her type had shouted, "Jehosaphat, she's a beauty! See her scoon!"

Ship builders who for years had been putting their hearts and souls into one beautiful ship after another found it somewhat difficult to right about face, deliberately scrap their ideals of usefulness clothed with beauty, and build prosaic schooners. It was

like asking a lover of horseflesh to exchange his racer for a truck horse. Concessions were made by tapering off.

Hon. Edward O'Brien, well over eighty, could hardly be expected to reverse his ideas. In 1881 he built the *Gen. Knox* and in 1882 the *Edward O'Brien*," known as the "big Edward," the last of his proud fleet. But when the hard-headed, tight-fisted "Sam" Watts continued to turn out ships there must have been a substantial reason for doing so. There was. His vessels were money makers. In 1881 he built the *Joseph B. Thomas*; in 1882, the *Cyrus Wakefield*; and 1883, the *R. D. Rice*, the second largest and the last ship built on the river. From that year on, for a little more than twenty years schooners in decreasing numbers were the only vessels built.

The ships justified their owner's belief in their ability to make money. They were all "Cape Horners," making many successful voyages. The *Gen. Knox* finally came to grief in New York harbor. Loaded with case oil she caught fire, presumably from spontaneous combustion, and was a total loss. Like all the O'Brien fleet the *Gen. Knox* and the *Edward O'Brien* carried no such lofty elegances as sky sails, nor did they attempt to break records. They were just good, wholesome, solidly built carriers, like people of the same type who accomplish much though they never make the headlines. In the second half of her career, from 1890-1898, the *Edward O'Brien* rounded the Horn nine times and the Cape of Good Hope twice. After rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1898 her master, Capt. David Oliver, was taken sick and died. The following year the vessel came to an untimely end by shipwreck.

The *Joseph B. Thomas*, Capt. "Bill" Lermond, was in no sense a clipper, but a steady-going cargo ship which went everywhere and carried everything. For the twenty years or more that she was under the command of Capt. Lermond, a superb seaman, she never called on her underwriters for a penny.

The *Cyrus Wakefield* was a lady, "lofty and imposing," with a full length figurehead, and claimed to be the fastest ship ever turned out in Thomaston. A clipper ship needed a narrow hull to cleave the water, tall masts to carry the billowing canvas, and a devil to drive her. The *Wakefield* had the first two but did not



exploit them until she found the third in young Hibbard of "Cappy Ricks" fame. Under his daring seamanship she made a record passage from 'Frisco to Liverpool and back. On the outward voyage, while her master was getting the feel of the ship, the time was average; but coming back, sure of his own mastery, he "let her out" and she cut across the Atlantic, around the Horn, and up the West coast to her San Francisco dock in 100 days, one of the best records ever made. Her later records were consistently good.

The *R. D. Rice*, 1883, the second largest ship ever built on the Georges was commanded by one of the Jordan clan, Newell or "Newt" as he was familiarly called. As he was a dashing young man, adored by all that was feminine it is not strange that his ship should respond to his every nod and beck, and win for him a race from San Francisco to Liverpool. The other contestants were the pride of Bath, the *Henry B. Hyde*, and the British crack ship, the *Dawpool*. The *Rice* could sail even when loaded with 3350 tons of wheat. On one voyage when the *Rice* had been jogging along at a good pace, Cap'n Jordan wrote in his log, "What's the matter with 291 miles in 24 hours in a Down East wood boat with her belly full of wheat?"

For twenty-two years after the *Rice* went down the ways schooners exclusively were built in Thomaston. At first they were comparatively small, three-masters of around 400 tons, but gradually their size was increased and a fourth and then a fifth mast added. By 1890, a 1019-ton capacity had been reached. Size gradually crept up until 1903 when the *Washington B. Thomas*, a five-master of 2639 tons, the largest craft of any type ever built on the river was launched. Her career was short, only sixty days. She had carried one cargo of coal from Virginia to Portland, Maine, and was returning with another when she went ashore and broke up on Stratton's Island near Old Orchard in June, 1903. The captain's wife drowned in the cabin after fracturing her skull. At the last moment a young son suddenly remembered a nickel he had left in the cabin and dashed the whole length of the vessel to retrieve it.

From 1905 until 1917 the Thomaston shipyards were deserted. Rank grass and tall weeds grew where for nearly a century chips

had fallen so thick and so fast that the riverbank was carpeted with them. Wharves went to decay. Shipyard workers grew old and feeble; many died. The town withdrew as it were, into its chimney corner to reminisce on its former glory and to check off one by one the passing of the proud ships as they foundered at sea or went ashore on some rocky coast; and to heave a sigh of farewell as captain after captain "set sail" on his last long voyage.

When the call for more vessels came in 1917 the building of wooden ships had become almost a lost art. However, a few yards were cleared of their weeds and rubbish, decrepit workers were called back to train the novices in double-quick time and once more Thomaston was abustle and astir. Nine schooners, averaging about 1500 tons, one steamer, and two barkentines were built between and including the years 1917 and 1920.

The last of the schooners, the five-master *Edna Hoyt* built in 1920 at a cost of \$280,000 was the fifty-sixth and final one of her class to be built in the United States, and the last of her class to ride the waves. She was lionized wherever she went. The Boston Herald of Sept. 30, 1934, says, "Berthed at the foot of Wall Street with her varnished masts rising high above the sooty funnels of tug and ferry boats, the big schooner, the largest sailing vessel now afloat, aroused the curiosity and interest of the dwellers in the metropolis to a remarkable degree. Crowds stood entranced on the pier and watched the cranes lowering bales and crates of merchandise (fertilizer, barbed wire, automobiles and cement) into the vessel's hold. Industrialists sent office boys, begging for the privilege of inspecting the ship. Wealthy enthusiasts offered high prices for a passage to the Spanish Main, the *Hoyt's* destination. Many would work for nothing for the sake of the trip and the experience. It is estimated 500 young men begged for positions on the *Hoyt* and at one time sixteen artists were counted sketching the vessel. The *Hoyt* made the front pages of all the New York and Boston papers, and an editorial was written about her in the Boston Herald. She was a nine-day's wonder."

After spending seventeen years "carrying everything from barrel shocks to coal, and from fertilizer to molasses, the entire length of the Atlantic seaboard," demand for tonnage was so



great that in 1937 she was sent "across." In August of that year the *Hoyt* sailed from Boston in ballast, picked up 1,500,000 feet of lumber in Halifax for Belfast, Ireland. From Ireland she went to Cardiff, Wales, and loaded coal for Venezuela. She encountered foul weather as soon as she put to sea. For three weeks she was battered by heavy seas, and was finally obliged to put into Lisbon leaking badly. To be sure she was not a young vessel as vessels go, but fate had been kind to her. While she was good to look upon, her hull was not so sound as that of earlier vessels because of the poorly seasoned lumber used in her construction. She could not stand the constant battering of heavy seas. Examination in port showed it unadvisable to attempt to repair her. Her captain was ordered to sell her and return home. As the Spanish Civil War was in progress at the time her iron was probably scrapped for projectiles to help a Spanish rebel blow his brother into Kingdom Come.

Averages are monotonous and commonplace. Extremes are much more interesting, much more dramatic. No one can put his finger on a given person or a given thing and say, "Here, this is the average." The average is an intangible thing, a thing that never has or never will have corporate existence. The "average man," the "average reader," the "average vessel" is simply nonexistent. So, in answer to the question, "What was the average length of life of a sailing vessel?" let us mention two extremes. Then, if the reader must have an average he may strike his own.

It is claimed that the ship *Haulco* built in Belfast, Maine, in 1856 held the record for the shortest span of life of any ship ever built. She was a good sized vessel of about 1100 tons, and perfectly equipped. Shortly after leaving her home port she dropped her pilot and proceeded under her own sail. In four hours she was a total loss on Saddleback Ledge in Penobscot Bay! The captain and crew took to the boats and rowed home, reaching there the same day.

At the other extreme was the schooner *Polly*, a staunch little craft of 45 tons built in 1804 at Amesbury, Massachusetts, but at one time owned in Vinalhaven. She had a varied career ranging from the sublime to the commonplace. As a privateer during the War of 1812 she took several prizes, then in turn was taken as

a prize. She spent one winter sunk under the ice at Kittery, Maine. As a carrier of Rockland lime she had several bouts with fire. Reconditioned again and again she dauntlessly put to sea after each rebuff rounding out fifty, seventy-five, one hundred—yes, one hundred and fourteen years before her name was taken from the Marine Register in 1918! For twenty-five years she had the distinction of being the oldest merchant vessel afloat under the American flag.



## *On Shipboard*

THE PERSONNEL on shipboard varied with the size of the craft and the type of rigging. A square-rigger required a larger crew than a schooner with its fore-and-aft rig, and a large four- or five-master needed more men than a small coaster. In the early days before engines were installed to do some of the hoisting, crews had to be larger on the same type of vessel than they were later when those labor saving devices came into common use.

Aboard the larger vessels there were always two mates, sometimes three; a bo's'un, a carpenter, sometimes a sail-maker, a cook, a steward, a varying number of able bodied seamen—the *Sunbeam* carried ten, the *A. G. Ropes*, seventeen) and several boys. Oftentimes the captain was accompanied by his wife and family.

The author of the "Maritime History of Massachusetts" says he can find no records that a wife accompanied her husband on a sea voyage before 1829. Cyrus Eaton in the "Annals of Warren" gives a much earlier date—a full century earlier. According to Eaton, Francis Cooper, an early Irish settler, came to this country in his own brig; married Lydia, daughter of Capt. John North of Pemaquid, later of Thomaston; and carried on "coasting in his own vessel, his wife and family sometimes making their home on board." It was Cooper's custom to have his brig repaired at Pemaquid. While in Boston sometime prior to 1740 to get men to make such repairs, his son, Boice, was advised it would be cheaper to burn the old craft for the iron in her and build a new one. He recklessly applied the torch. When the father returned and found his vessel in ashes he decided to move to Broad Bay (Waldoboro), where he was located when the German settlers arrived about 1740. Not being able to cope with the strangers, the Coopers then came to the Georges where the

son died in 1795 at the age of seventy-five. That would make 1720 the date of his birth and the years from 1720 to 1740 the years during which his mother was at home at sea.

Mrs. Cooper undoubtedly had the best of reasons for taking up life on shipboard. At its best, pioneer life in the coastal settlements was insecure to say the least. In addition to Indian attacks there were frequent raids by pirates and sea mauraders. Almost any woman would have sought the comparative safety of the sea in company with her husband in preference to the terrifying conditions she would certainly have to face if she staid on shore alone. Life was hard whichever way she chose. To be sure, accommodations on shipboard were cramped, but, neither was there much elbow room in the little log huts or in the cubicles in the forts where so many of the settlers were forced to live. When everything was weighed in the balance, the advantages of seafaring life must have so far offset the disadvantages that there was really only one choice and that was to go to sea. In all probability there were many other pioneer wives besides Mrs. Cooper who for the same reason accustomed themselves to life aboard their husband's vessels.

A century later the practice became so common that it was a foregone conclusion if a woman married a seafaring man she would share with him his life on the bounding main. Every young captain, especially if he had a new vessel, dreamed of taking his bride to sea and every young bride regarded a ship's cabin as an ideal place in which to spend a honeymoon. If the bride proved herself a good sailor, neither incurably sea-sick nor mortally afraid of the sea, she usually accompanied her husband on his voyages until a growing family made it imperative that she spend some time ashore. Such a mode of life must have had many good reasons for its wide acceptance. It could not have come into vogue by the precedent established by a single woman any more than a whole flock of birds could be induced to migrate because one of their number had done so and found it an agreeable experience.

The explanation probably lies in the fact that by the middle of the last century there really was a choice and that was in favor of the sea. To be sure there were no longer lurking savages to



make life ashore a constant peril, and peace treaties had ended enemy incursions; but sea voyages were longer and a woman's life at home without her husband was lonely and fraught with much care and worry. Accommodations on shipboard had become almost luxurious. At sea domestic duties were reduced to a minimum. Then, in addition to companionship with one's husband there was the lure of travel and an inborn love of the sea. Many a sea captain's wife was also a sea captain's daughter and had become accustomed to a seafaring life in childhood. One woman who went to sea with her husband for forty years is quoted as saying that, "Going to sea is like taking the bitter with the sweet. There is pleasure in port, plenty of money, and visiting many foreign countries is interesting."

If there were no passengers on shipboard a captain was much alone. As superior officer he was absolutely without companionship. It was customary for him never to address anybody, not even the mate, except to give a command. He kept as aloof from his officers and men as the sternest general from the lowliest rookie. By virtue of his rank this isolation was not only desirable but necessary for the maintenance of the ship's discipline. No matter how friendly or how affable a captain might be when ashore, he accepted and defended his role as absolute monarch on shipboard. No one, not even the mate, was his official equal and he would have every one know it.

The sailors, while not supposed to do any "gabbing" on duty, could fraternize to their heart's content if they saw fit when in the forecabin, during the "dog-watch," or when off duty. The mates, though usually natural enemies, and like all petty officers jealous of their prerogatives, could show some brotherly feeling toward each other if they cared to do so. The steward and the cook could smoke a friendly pipe in the galley during the "dog-watch." The captain alone was like a person in solitary confinement. It must have been difficult to maintain such aloofness in the days when Thomaston vessels were manned by Thomaston men and captain and mate were relatives or old neighbors. Ships are ships, however, and custom is a mighty anchor. If the tradition of the sea said a captain's social tendencies must be restrained, restrained they were.

Both officers and crew preferred a master who was "every inch a captain." Condescension and patronage were abhorrent to them. In "Thar She Blows!" the author tells of a captain who lowered his dignity by condescending to praise the mate, telling him he was the finest mate that had ever shipped with him and that "in the locker on the port side there's rum and segars at your service." Whereupon the mate savagely retaliated in some such words as these, "I don't want your rum, Sir, no more your segars. All I want of you, Sir, is plain *seevility*, and that the commonest, *goddamdest* kind!"

Thomaston cap'n's, being family men, naturally craved companionship and that of their wives and children being most acceptable they secured that companionship by taking them to sea. As the ship's afterhouse, like the modern trailer, was a marvel of compact convenience it lent itself admirably to a limited form of domesticity.

The captain, his family, and the first mate occupied the afterhouse on the quarter deck. The dining saloon was the dividing line, the great gulf between the captain's quarters and the mate's stateroom. The captain's stateroom, aft the dining saloon, was the "holy of holies" aboard ship. His stamping ground, the weather side of the quarter deck, was to the sailing vessel what the bridge is to the modern steamship. No sailor was allowed to plant his feet on the quarter deck except to man the wheel or, on the leeward side, for salute.

The mate could dine with the captain and his family, but he was never allowed to forget it was a privilege. The forward part of the vessel was the mate's realm. There were his special responsibilities—the foremast with all its head-gear, the anchor to heave or to hold, and the crew who came running like ants scurrying out of an ant hill in response to his orders. He ruled with a heavy hand, a swift foot, a loud voice, profanity, and if he had the capacity for it, a crude wit. The crew were expected to obey instantly, to refrain from retort, and to laugh no matter how stale the joke. If they had any ideas or opinions they were supposed to keep them a dark secret. They were simply "hands." The mate stood on his dignity, too. He was very jealous of his title "Mr." by which he was always addressed even by the cap-



tain. It is told of one Thomaston captain that when mate with his father, the latter inadvertently called him "Billy." "Billy" held his tongue for the time being, but when he found his father alone in the cabin he spoke his mind and demanded, "Hereafter you see that you call me Mister!" While profanity was usually accepted as a necessary vehicle of expression, as indispensable to the conveyance of an order as powder to the cannonball there were vessels, some of them from Thomaston on which no profanity was tolerated.

Much of the ship's harmony and the efficiency of the crew depended upon the firm but steady discipline maintained by the mate. If he knew how to handle men he could get out of them willingly their last ounce of energy. If he drove them just for the sake of driving or withheld privileges just for the sake of withholding them, the men countered with bungling and with soldiering. The crew welcomed a strict mate. If he did not have enough "back-bone in his brains" to execute the captain's orders then the captain would interfere, causing friction all along the line and inducing a condition of affairs whose last state was worse than the first.

The second mate's status was full of "buts." He lived in what Dana calls "the land of knives and forks and tea-cups," *but* his stateroom opened out of the cabin's gangway. He ate at the captain's table, *but* not until the captain and first mate had finished their repast. He had an officer's status; *but* the captain and the first mate usually looked down their noses at him, and the crew felt like thumbing theirs at him although they never did. He was superior to the crew, *but* obliged to work with them. The first mate never went aloft, but the second did. The "waist of the ship" was his realm. All in all his status was betwixt and between, *but*, if he had "the stuff in him" he was on his way to the quarter deck just as surely as was the mate.

The steward and sometimes the boys, known as "ship's cousins," bunked 'tween decks in the steerage or in a separate corner of the forecastle. The sailors were in the fo'c'sle in the ship's bow, so the entire length of the ship separated the crew from their master. The steward was the master's servant and as such

was answerable to him alone. The mate, who bossed everybody else aboard ship, was irked at this, consequently the two were usually at sword's points. The steward was sometimes accompanied by his wife who served as stewardess to the captain's family.

So rigorously were the rules of the ship's etiquette maintained that observance of them became second nature. It is claimed that at "Sailor's Snug Harbor" in New York City, where many retired mariners "stand their last watch" and all are given the "courtesy title of captain," the men who were captains find it no harder to condescend to share the proud title with their inferiors, than do the cooks and bo'suns to accept their honorary title and presume to associate on terms of equality with their former superiors. Many of the latter on first entering the home, in loneliness of spirit, naturally gravitate to the "lee" side of the dining room leaving the "port" side to their quarter-deck comrades.

It is told that one Knox County captain who "changed to steam" took his sailing vessel code with him. When his son, an oiler on the vessel, was stricken with a fatal illness, the boy's mother begged he be brought into the cabin where she could minister to him, but the father refused, saying, "he is an *oiler* and it cannot be done." However, the mother contrived to get it done and the boy died in her arms.

Life on shipboard was as regular as the rotation of the earth and coincided with it exactly. No "kin to cain't"—(can see to can't see) of the southern darkey for the sailor. No pay and a half for overtime, because there was no overtime. In reality his day was twenty-four hours long.

The twenty-four hours were divided into "watches" of four hours each, with the exception of two two-hour watches from 4 to 8 P.M. called the "dog-watches." That break in time gave an alternation of night duties to all the members of the crew, four hours one night and eight the next. The watch from noon until 4 P.M. was called the "afternoon-watch." Then came the "dog watch" followed by the night watches; the first, the middle, and the morning. The first watch lasted from 8 P.M. until midnight; the middle from midnight until 4 A.M.; the morning, from



4 to 8 A.M. From 8 A.M. until noon was the forenoon watch. The crew, divided into the captain's watch and the mate's watch, alternated duties relentlessly.

The foregoing regime was strictly followed so long as weather conditions were favorable. If, however, nasty weather prevailed, if the vessel sprang a leak and pumps had to be manned, then "watch and watch" was kept. And of course there were times, besides the usual period from noon until dark, when all hands, including the carpenter and the cook, were on deck battling for their lives or the life of the ship. When there was a gale it was not uncommon for a captain to pace the deck the whole night long, catching his sleep by day in short naps under the weather rail.

Time on shipboard was established by "taking the sun" at noon and reckoned audibly by "bells." Sunrise and sunset were variable, but the sun at its zenith was something to go by, something to depend on. Since time was lost or gained as a vessel sailed east or west it was necessary to constantly check up to keep the reckoning accurate. Reckoning by the sun, though not reduced to fractions of a minute, was sufficiently accurate to make possible the division of the four watches into eight "bells," each "bell" being of half-hour duration. For example, beginning at 12:30 A.M. "one bell" was struck. An additional stroke was given at each succeeding half hour interval until at the end of the watch "eight bells" were struck, signifying that the middle watch was over and the morning watch begun. At the end of the first half-hour of the succeeding watch once again "one bell" was struck and an increasing number of strokes given as in the preceding watch.

Captain Austin Williams after retiring from the sea refused to go by any other time than "sun-time." He used to "take the sun" every day and thus obtained high noon for Thomaston. Other Thomaston men set their watches by Captain Williams' time and boasted of its accuracy. When the railroads came standard time displaced local time. This made a great stir in Thomaston. One old gentleman refused to change his time. To him Captain Williams' time was God Almighty's time and he kept to local time to the end of his days. To those interested in Captain Wil-

liams' method of "taking the sun" it might be interesting to explain that he obtained an artificial horizon by using a basin of water placed on an inverted barrel just within the door of his barn. On windy days he used molasses instead of water.

The men on duty during the morning watch sprang to at day-break and tidied the vessel up by swabbing the decks, coiling the ropes, filling the water butts and getting everything ship-shape for another day's run. They did before breakfast at 7:30 what many a landlubber would consider a day's work. Half an hour for breakfast, then the regular routine began in earnest, "grinding, drudging, toiling." If it were not what the men were made for, it was what they signed up for. There were times when "a man felt like running into a hole and pulling the hole in after him"; instead he had to go out on the end of a yardarm and dangle over the edge of infinity.

"Ports are no good—ships rot, men go to the devil," one writer of sea stories has said. Such being the case, it was well that as soon as a vessel weighed anchor the ship's routine began. While she was in harbor there was no crew aboard, only an officer or two, a watchman and sometimes the "boys." Stevedores did the loading and unloading. One Thomaston lad had the shock of his young life when looking after dunnage in the hold of a vessel that was being unloaded. The body of one of the stevedores came hurtling into the hold, landing almost at the boy's feet. Shocked and terrified by the accident he was horrified to hear the boss sing out, "Chuck that fellow out and hitch on another stove!" Business as usual.

All vagaries of wind and weather aside, the performance of the vessel depended in large degree upon what seafaring men call the "trim of the ship," that is, how she was loaded. Great care had to be taken to see she was not loaded too heavily either fore or aft, more heavily on one side than on the other, nor with too much weight below or above the center of gravity. If a cargo were not well stowed it might make the ship "cranky" or it might shift, to the vessel's undoing. Sometimes a shifted cargo could be restowed and the ship's balance restored; sometimes the problem could be solved by jettisoning a part of the load; and then again, because of the very nature of the cargo itself, nothing could



be done to remedy the situation after mishap had occurred. It is a tradition of the sea, once a vessel has rolled her main yard under, she will not roll it back, and ultimately is posted at Lloyd's as missing. It is believed the shifting of the cargo of railroad rails and car wheels was responsible for the loss of the *Minnie Watts* off Cape Horn.

No matter what the cargo the whole vessel had to be tidied up as soon as she sailed. The first few days—Capt. "Dave" Rivers said the first two weeks—were the hardest. Everybody, even if sober, had some sort of a psychological hang-over, and any drunks had a physical one. Everybody was touchy and on edge. After the captain got used to the mate and the mate got used to the captain, and the mate got the crew shaken down, then and only then could real teamwork be expected.

With everything on an even keel and everybody at his allotted tasks, life on shipboard customarily went on "as fine as Sunday," and nothing but a gale could disturb its serenity. The captain took his regular turns about deck, "took the sun" at noon, worked out his latitude and his longitude so carefully that there were few moments in the course of a long voyage when he could not put his finger on a pin-point of a chart and say, "We are here." Sailing east, west, north, or south, encircled by a horizon that to the untrained observer might seem monotonously the same, the captain literally "hitched his wagon to a star" and plunged forward. He was as familiar with the Southern Cross and the Magellan Clouds as with the North Star and the two Dippers, and proclaimed them his counselors and guides. He worked hand-in-glove with, or boldly breasted the various prevailing winds. If his vessel were a clipper and he a driver oft times fearing a terrified sailor might cut the lines a captain has been known to have certain sails set, chained, and padlocked, and did not take them in until God Almighty took them in. He took all the advantage offered by ocean currents. With a sigh of resignation he accepted the calms, the doldrums, the stretches of glassy waters with their exasperating immobility.

He moved in an ever-advancing circle. What lay within that circle constituted his problem. Below the horizon his mind could not safely dip. On the horizon, yes. He had to be prepared to

encounter what he saw there. That was the line which compassed his destiny and the destiny of his ship.

In normal times it was reassuring to see another sail and a welcome break in a long monotonous voyage to speak another craft and perhaps give and receive most welcome news. A vessel in "speaking" was supposed to give the name of the vessel and its master, the port of departure, whither bound, cargo, and if the bearer of any news of common interest to report that. The vessel "spoken" replied in like manner. Records of such encounters were entered in the log book and often proved of great assistance in accounting for the progress or final destiny of a vessel. Usually, if vessels were bound for the same port a race ensued. Sometimes the race would be of only a few days' duration, in the case of the clippers a few hours; again, a sail might be in sight for weeks or even months. Two Thomaston vessels bound from New York to San Francisco were in sight of each other the entire distance except for a few days in rounding the Horn.

When a vessel once put to sea it was supposed to go about its business, never stopping for anything but its own welfare or to give aid to a ship in distress. In calms, when not a breath of air could be coaxed into the sails, ships sometimes mysteriously came together, only to be scattered the moment a breeze began to stir. Oftentimes brief visits were made between ships when becalmed. Capt. "Tom" Libby's daughter recalled such a visit when aboard the *Gen. Knox* with her father en route from New York to San Francisco. A Scottish ship becalmed near the *Knox* sent two boatloads of visitors aboard for tea. Reading material was exchanged and a pleasant social hour passed. That night, a few hours after the visit, it began to blow wickedly and the next day the ship was nowhere to be seen.

In rounding the Horn three ships were in sight all of one day. The weather was rough and the sea mountainous. All day long it was like climbing hill after hill, but they never lost sight of their companions except for a brief moment now and then as one or another dipped in the trough of the sea. On another trip it was so calm that "one could have gone around on a shingle," but they had no company other than the albatrosses which hovered about the ship, sometimes between the masts, for hours. If



perchance the birds accidentally alighted on deck they became grotesquely helpless, and wretchedly sea-sick, vomiting just like a miserable human being.

Two brothers of the well known Watts family of St. George had a most dramatic meeting off the Horn. Cap'n Edward of the bark *Pactolus* and Cap'n Seymour of the ship *John McDonald* had not seen each other for nine years. They had hoped to meet in Baltimore where both were to load coal for 'Frisco, but just missed each other. The *Pactolus* finished loading and put to sea before the *McDonald* arrived. In the South Atlantic the *Pactolus* was partially disabled in a bout with a hurricane. Off the Horn she was fortunately becalmed in company with another vessel which proved to be the *John McDonald*! For four days the vessels were in each other's company, but three miles apart. On the fifth day Seymour signalled he was going to visit his brother in the afternoon. "Cap'n Ed" and his wife anxiously watched the lowering of the boat on the other vessel and held their breath until it came alongside. Cap'n Seymour's wife did not accompany her husband, instead she sent her good will and magazines. For two hours the brothers chatted. When the visitor dropped over the side of the *Pactolus* he told his brother he would report him as soon as he reached San Francisco, saying: "Of course I shall arrive first as you are disabled." In the meantime the two vessels, as though stirred by a friendly impulse, had moved nearer together. They were only a mile and a half apart when Seymour and his two sailors clambered up the side of his own vessel. During the night the vessels separated. The following day there was a terrific gale. In due time the *Pactolus* arrived in San Francisco, but the *McDonald* was nowhere to be seen. She never arrived, never was spoken after that memorable visit off thê Horn.

On shipboard as every where else "victuals and drink" were a pressing problem in the days of sail. The ocean then as now was as full of good fish as ever were caught, but unless becalmed nobody had time for fishing. The folk in the after cabin had a few more delicacies, such as butter, cheese, jams, dried fruits, nuts, and fancy crackers; but the main dish, the piece-de-resistance, day after day was either cured meat or salt fish as in the fo'c's'le. To be sure it usually was of a higher grade, but the slight difference

in quality could neither lift it out of its classification nor ward against the great monotony of its use as a steady article of diet. Sometimes hens, pigs, and goats for their milk were carried to sea if there were children aboard. If hens proved good layers, they occasionally succeeded in "doubling the Cape" and in winning the proud title of "Cape-Horners" before being sacrificed to grace a feast. One captain's wife used to run the length of the ship every time she heard a hen cackle. If she found no egg she accused the sailors of beating her to it. In spite of that fact the men got a great deal of diversion by cackling just to see her run.

One of the greatest hardships on shipboard was the lack of fresh water. Butts were filled before sailing; water was caught whenever possible during showers; but because there was no satisfactory way to store it, it was never palatable. That was a great hardship, especially for the crew. The captain might have his tea, coffee, cocoa or "bottled refreshments" on tap; but the men, though they were usually served coffee or tea at meals, had nothing but water to slake their thirst between times and the bucket from which they drank was not one "dripping with coolness" either. The water was warm and brackish, stale and flat. The only thing one could say in its favor was that it was wet. Whenever possible stops were made to secure a fresh supply. At the *Chincha* Islands where all water had to be brought from the main, in 1869, the master of the *L. B. Gilchrest* paid \$22 for 2200 gallons of water at one cent a gallon.

If the supply of water ran low and there was no way of replenishing it, that was a dire calamity indeed. Rigorous methods of rationing sometimes had to be resorted to. If necessary an allotted amount would be drawn off for each day and nobody allowed an extra drop until the next dole was made. A Thomaston boy aboard a Waldoboro vessel ran up against a different solution of the problem. Everybody was thirsty and clamoring for water. The supply kept getting lower and lower and not a drop of rain fell to replenish it. Finally, one night after the men's last meal, just before the close of the dog-watch, the captain mustered all hands in the ship's waist and spoke to them from the top of the after house. He told them what they knew only too well, that the ship's supply of water was running low, adding "I have been go-



ing master of a ship for a great many years and have never put men on an allowance and I don't intend to begin now." Handing the carpenter a dipper he told him to go aloft, drive a tenpenny nail in the mast head and hang the dipper on it. When the carpenter had done as directed and was down on deck again, the captain concluded with, "Now, men, when you are thirsty, go up and get that dipper, drink all you want, and then take it back—but remember, no man has a drink who doesn't first go aloft for the dipper." The solution of the problem appealed to the men. No water was wasted, no one took an unnecessary drink, and no one died of thirst.

If a voyage were much prolonged, rations of both food and water frequently ran low. Some owners intentionally limited the supply of food countering a captain's complaint with, "Make it do."

When a sailor signed up the contract assured him his daily "whack," a specified amount of coffee, tea, sugar, beef, molasses, beans, rice, etc. That looked good on paper, but if a man did not get his "whack," no matter what grounds he had for complaint there was really no redress except to ship next voyage on another vessel. Some captains who prided themselves on being more liberal than the law allowed would ask their men when the watches were first mustered if they would have their "whack" or what he would give them. As a rule the men preferred to trust to their master's liberality. Such an expression of faith undoubtedly worked advantageously both ways.

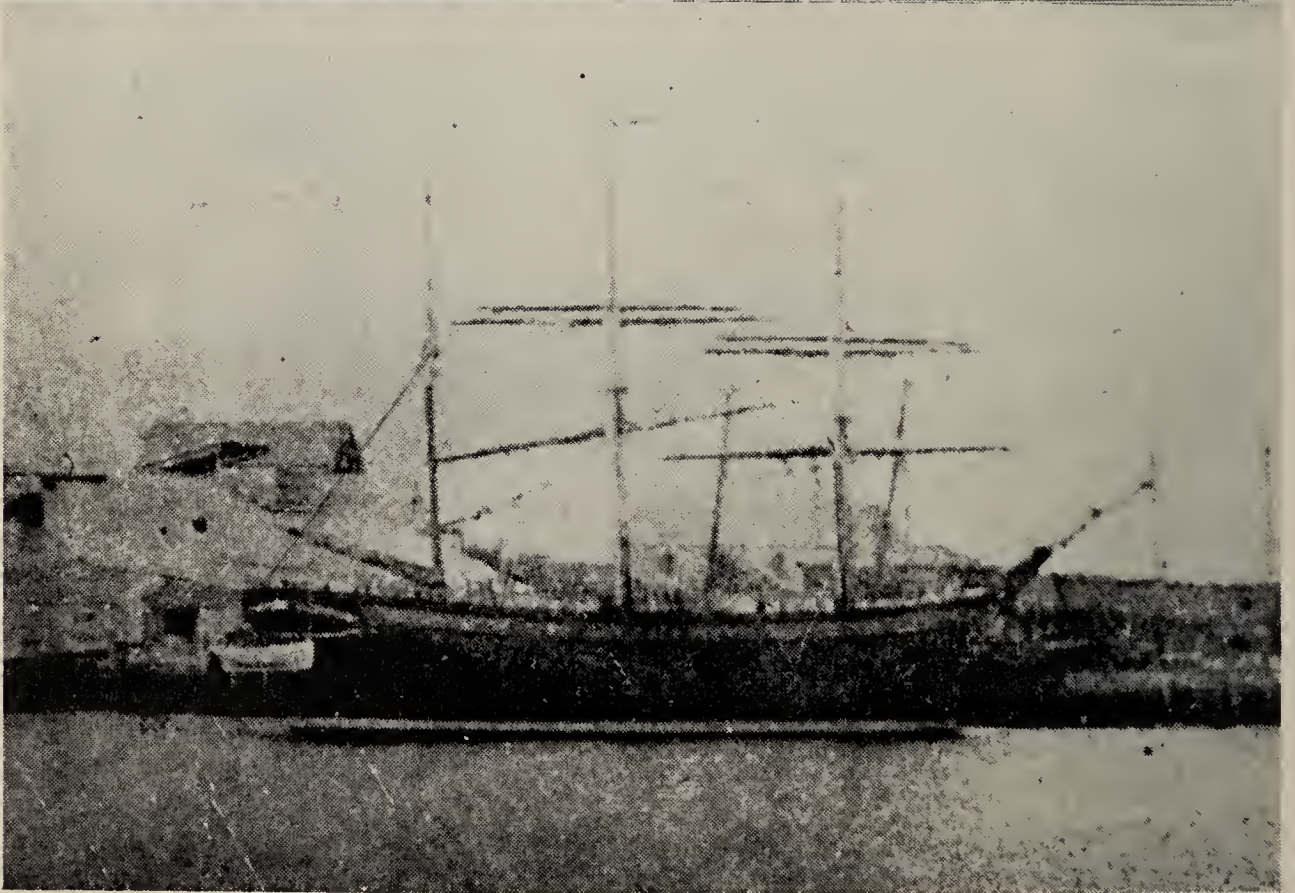
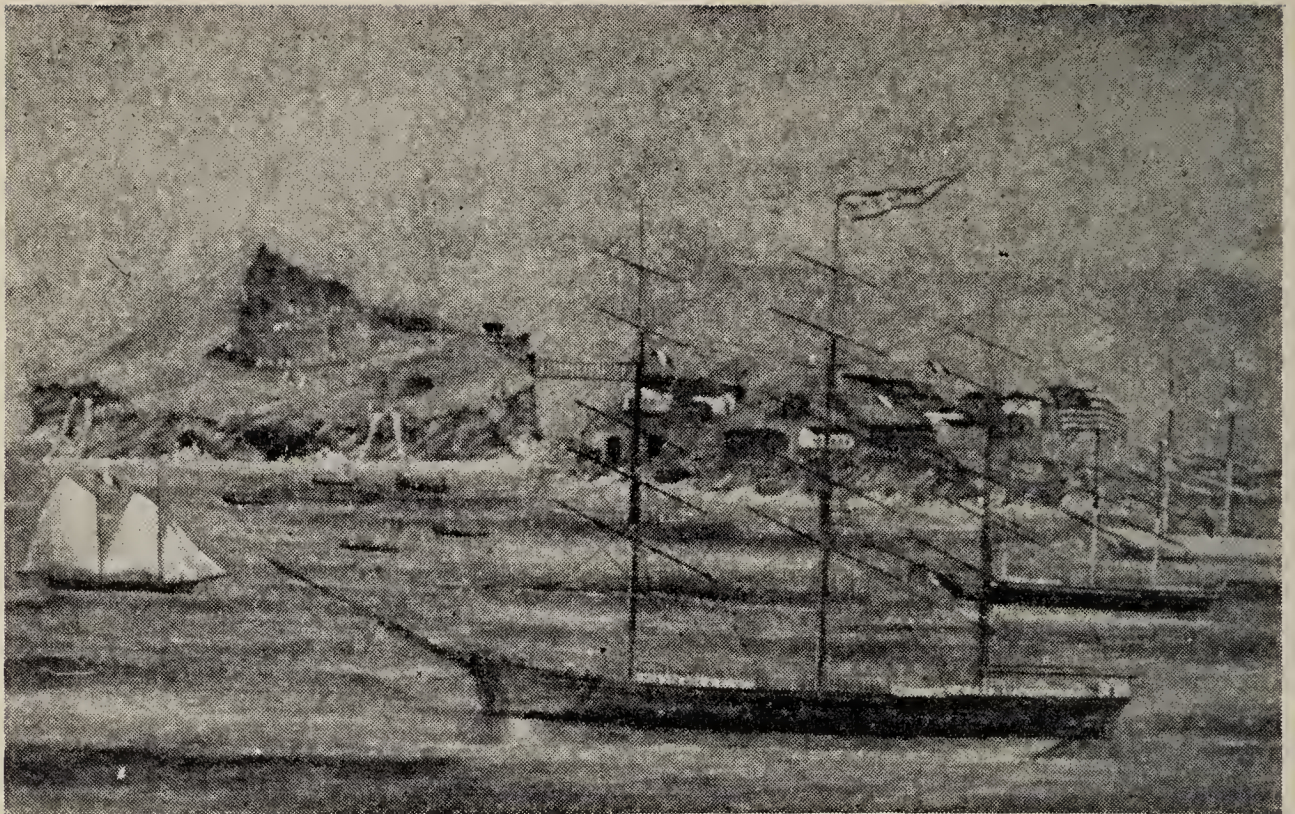
Occasionally, when the men had been under great stress and strain for a long stretch they were treated to a draught of grog "to hearten them." Mike, the Thomaston fellow who had been a friendly shipmate to many young boys, was washed overboard and drowned while hastening to the pilot house of the *Martha McNeill* to get his share of such a treat. The *McNeill*, Capt. "Bill" Masters, had run into a heavy gale. All hands were on deck battling for life. During a lull it seemed an opportune time to give the men "a bit of cheer." Cap'n Masters was standing in the pilot house with filled glasses waiting for the men to come for it. Just as Mike reached the capstan in front of the pilot house, the vessel shipped a heavy sea. The captain was knocked uncon-





Top: Burgess and O'Brien's lime kiln near bridge in Thomaston.  
Bottom: Bridge in Thomaston. Maine state prison in background.





Top: A picture of the Chincha Islands. Bottom: Barque *Sunbeam* in which the Ranlett family sailed to the Chincha Islands, around the world and halfway around again.



scious. When he came to he was rolling backward and forward in the water, and Mike and the cap of the capstan to which he had probably tried to cling were gone as were the quarter-boat, the booby hatch, the sky-lights of the after house, and the "bit of cheer."

The majority of American sailing vessels had a reputation for "good grub." When in port they served fresh meat and vegetables to the sailors. As proof of that there lies before me a bill for provisions for the *L. B. Gilchrest*, Capt. E. Watts, while at the *Chincha* Islands during December and January of the winter of 1866 and 1867.

Ship *L. B. Gilchrest* to W. R. Cottrell, Dr.

1866

Dec. 14	to	95 lb.	Beef	at 8¢	.....	\$ 7.60
"	"		Vegetables	.....		4.
21	"	175 "	Beef	.....		14.
"	"	11 "	Mutton	.....		1.38
"	"	"	Vegetables	.....		4.50
"	"	"	Potatoes	.....		5.50
"	"	"	Onions	.....		5.00
Dec. 22,	(In anticipation of Christmas)					
			2 pairs Ducks	.....		3.50
"			3 Turkeys	.....		8.50
28		125 lb.	Beef	.....		10.

With the exception of the ducks and turkeys, the purchases of meat and vegetables during January were in the same proportion, but in larger quantities, as evidently Cap'n Watts was stocking up for his forthcoming voyage to Liverpool.

An important institution on shipboard was the "slop-chest." In sailor parlance the word "slop" covered his outfit in general—his clothing, bedding, and other accessories. As many a sailor's wardrobe consisted only of the clothes in which he stood, it was up to the captain to carry a supply of dungarees, oilskin coats, seaboots, etc. When "Jack" had need of any of these articles he was provided with them and the price deducted from his wages. Dunnage was a nuisance anyway, a great incumbrance of which he was usually glad to be free. He could wear only one suit at a time. Why bother with more?

In addition to being a top-notch navigator and a martinet for



discipline, a master mariner was also supposed to be a dabbler in drugs and to have some knowledge of medicine and surgery. All sorts of terrible accidents occurred aboard ship. Men fell from the masts, they broke their legs, they fractured their arms, they got deep cuts and bad bruises. They doubled up with cramps, stiffened with rheumatism, became delirious with fever and were stricken with all the other ills that flesh is heir to from German measles to small pox, yellow fever, and Asiatic cholera. On long voyages scurvy was the bane of a sailor's existence. That developed because of the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables. Hence, whenever possible, stops were made to procure such foodstuffs to ward off or to stem the ravages of the insidious foe. Having no radio announcer to describe symptoms and no one to prescribe remedies, it was up to the captain to be diagnostician, doctor, druggist, and surgeon. He had to know just where to amputate, how to put on splints, apply a tourniquet, or give other first aid when the need for it arose. He had to know how much castor oil constituted a laxative and how much laudanum a sedative. That he might be prepared for all such emergencies, Capt. Watts of the *Gilchrest* laid in the following supplies at Liverpool in March 1868:

- 12 oz. Flower of Sulphur
- 1 lb. Linseed
- 8 oz. Tincture of Rhubarb
- 8 " Spirits of Lavender
- 4 gross Peppermint
- 8 oz. Friars Balsam
- 8 " Spirits Hartshorn
- 8 " Liniment Arnica
- 2 " Magnesia
- 8 " Syrup Squills
- 2 " Camphor
- 2 " Sulphuric Acid
- 2 " Powdered Jalap
- 2 " " Rhubarb
- 4 " Laudanum
- 4 " Seidlitz Mixture
- 4 " Tartaric Acid
- 4 " Gum Arabic
- 2 " Antimonial Wine
- 2 gross Cinnamon
- 4 doz. (boxes) Purgative Pills
- 2 oz. Calomel

1	"	Dover's Powder
1	"	Tartar Emetic
2	"	Sulphate Zinc
4	"	Basilican Ointment
4	"	Powdered Alum
3	"	Chamomile Flowers
4	"	Senna Leaves
6	"	Surgeon's Liniment
12	"	Opodeldoc
2	"	Cream Tartar
8	"	Spirits Camphor
1	"	Sulphate Quinine
7½#		Castor Oil and Bottle
24#		Epsom Salts
2		Bottles Citrate Magnesia
1		Carbonate Soda
2		Bottles Pain Killer
1	"	Chlorodyne
1	"	Condies Fluid
		A mortar and pestle
6		Bandages
		Medicine for Sea man
1	yd.	Adhesive Plaster
2	pieces	Court Plaster
7½#		Castor Oil and Bottle
8	oz.	Paregoric.

Total	£7	.5s.	.7d
Discount		4	.1
	£7	.1s	.6d.

A careful perusal of these items shows that the old stand-bys, castor oil, epsom salts, peppermint, and purgative pills led all the rest in quantity. Evidently the sailorman, like the modern bridge playing woman and her auto riding brother suffered from a "sluggish system." How true that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

If the captain's good wife were aboard she usually turned to and became an "angel of mercy," ministering to the stricken men in their hour of need. Because of her lack of official prestige she could be more humane than her husband. One Thomaston woman even had to take her turn at the wheel when many of the crew were sick of lead poisoning contracted by drinking water caught from the roof of the freshly painted house.

A local paper on sea-faring days in Thomaston tells of a packet ship's physician who had a simple remedy for everything—salt



water. During the course of the voyage he fell overboard. On hearing the commotion the captain rushed up on deck to inquire what was the matter and was told it was nothing, nothing at all; the doctor had simply fallen into his medicine chest.

Capt. Ranlett of the *Ionian* was in San Francisco at the time of the great conflagration of 1851. The fire raced along the whole waterfront raining sparks on the decks of the fleet tied up there. The captain of one vessel ran ashore into a warehouse to save something or other. The doors closed upon him and he never came out. The vessel lying beside the *Ionian* caught fire and burned to the water's edge. For a time it looked as if the *Ionian*, too, were doomed. Four Thomaston boys—one of whom was "Billy" McHyler—stood by the ship, but the greater part of the crew deserted. In desperation the *Ionian's* hatches were opened up to get at the buckets with which she was loaded, and a bucket brigade, including the captain's wife and the stewardess, was formed. By quick and heroic action the ship was saved.

Not being able to sign up another crew Capt. Ranlett set sail as soon as he could, trusting he could pick up a full complement of men at the Hawaiian Islands. Sure enough when he reached those blessed isles swarms of *Kanaka* boys came swimming out to greet the vessel. At first, as a matter of precaution, guns were trained on them, but when they gave evidence of friendly intentions they were welcomed aboard and several of the most promising induced to join the crew. Alas and alack! Hardly had they proceeded on their voyage when several of the recruits came down with smallpox! The captain and his wife waited upon the sick and dying. Thanks to vaccination neither they nor any Americans in the crew contracted the disease.

Capt. Gilchrest of the schooner *Grecian* was yet more unfortunate than Capt. Ranlett. In a voyage from Savannah, Georgia, to Thomaston in August, 1852, the vessel was struck by lightning and about the same time the crew was stricken with intermittent fever. One by one the officers and crew died. When the schooner nosed its way up the river the 28th of the month the captain was the only soul on board!

Children were born at sea. In that case the captain, instead of tramping up and down the deck waiting for a nurse to announce

the arrival of a son and heir, had to officiate at the delivery himself. It was a trying experience, but most of the mothers and babies and all the fathers survived the gruelling ordeal. One Thomaston captain admonished his wife, "Wait till we get ashore, Josie! Wait till we get ashore!" when she announced her time had come and that labor pains had begun. The woman had a sense of humor and when at some later time her husband was groaning with pain she countered with "Wait till we get ashore, John! Wait till we get ashore!"

When genial mate Donovan of the barque *Lottie Moore* suddenly became dour and sullen in his attitude toward the captain, and cross and crabbed with the crew, everybody aboard ship began shaking his head and wondering what had come over Donovan. It seemed hardly possible he could be plotting mutiny for no one was in *calhoots* with him but his wife, the stewardess; and she, too, had always shown herself a friendly soul. The trouble began to brew just after the barque left Colombo for New York. "Day by day in every way" the conduct of the two grew more and more inexplicable. The mate became simply unbearable, and the stewardess, her duties over, withdrew regularly to her stateroom as though brooding over some fancied wrong. The climax came when off St. Helena. Dinner was announced. The mate curtly informed the captain, "We are not having dinner to-day," emphasizing the statement by going into his stateroom and firmly closing the door. The puzzled captain and his family sat down at the table, but ate little as they exchanged inquiring glances. Just as they were rising from the table, a strangely familiar sound came from behind the closed door. A baby's cry! So well had the mother kept her secret that not even the captain's wife had suspected the stork had been hovering over the vessel and that it was the shadow of that that had been causing all the trouble. The atmosphere cleared immediately. The mate became his genial self again, his wife the friendly soul she had been before, and "Lottie Moore Donovan" the vessel's namesake, a ray of sunshine for the remainder of the voyage.

Although a captain along with his other privileges and prerogatives could legally perform the marriage ceremony, it goes without saying that there could not have been many marriages



on sailing vessels at sea, but many a captain's daughter or other relative was married in port as were Almira, daughter of Cap'n Sanders Curling, and Cap'n Edwin Watts at Liverpool. The marriage record reads:

St. Bride's Church in Liverpool			
<i>When married</i>	<i>Name and Surname</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Condition</i>
July 27, 1860	Edwin Watts	full	Bachelor
	Almira Curling	full	Spinster
<i>Rank of Profession</i>	<i>Residence at time</i>	<i>Father's name</i>	<i>Father's occupation</i>
Master Mariner	Hockesson Dock	Wm. Watts	Master Mariner
	Bramley Moore Dock	Sanders Curling	Master Mariner
Signed			
By me, Minister, Wm. M. Talloon			
This marriage was solemnized between us: Edwin Watts			
Almira C. Curling			
In the presence of us: Sanders Curling			
Mary O. Henderson			

One romance which never ceased to thrill the seafaring folk of the Georges was that of Lillius Gillchrist of St. George, who had many relatives in Thomaston, and William R. Grace of Callao, Peru. Grace was an Irishman, a native of Queenstown, County Cork, Ireland. His youthful ambition to enter the navy being thwarted by his father he took his fate in his own hands and ran away to sea when only fourteen. Shipping aboard a sailing vessel (declared by the late Edwin S. Watts to have been a Thomaston vessel) bound for New York, he worked his way as a common sailor. While still in his 'teens he made his way to Peru where he entered the employ of a shipping office. The young lady, on a voyage with her father and mother, met the young man there. It was another case of love at first sight. Because of religious differences, the parents objected for a time; but finally yielded when the young lover signified his willingness to "round the Horn" and come to St. George to claim his bride. The marriage took place in the Gillchrest homestead which is still standing in Tenants Harbor, St. George. Returning to Peru the young couple set up a home which became the Mecca for all their sea-going friends from St. George and Thomaston.

In a few short years Grace, as head of "Casa Grace" (the House of Grace) had Peru, her mines, her guano, her railroads, and even her government in the hollow of his hand. Tolerant folk have called him "a highly successful pioneer in economic imperialism"; others, "the Pirate of Peru." When, in the course of the years it became expedient for him to do so, Grace put his South American interests in the hands of representatives, and returned to New York, where he twice became mayor on a reform ticket, an avowed enemy of Tammany. In all his efforts for the betterment of his adopted city he was ably seconded by his devoted and loyal wife.

Mrs. Grace outlived her husband by eighteen years. When it came her turn to make her last, long voyage she came back to her childhood home to rest with her father and mother in the little churchyard at Wiley's Corner on the banks of the Georges. Her name is kept in living remembrance by the Lillius Grace Institute at Tenants Harbor. The institute, devoted to the training of boys and girls in manual and domestic arts, is maintained by the Grace family in loving memory of the co-founder of the "House of Grace."

Deaths at sea were a fairly common occurrence. Some were accidental, but, as on land, many were from natural causes. Seafaring folk like soldiers developed a more or less fatalistic attitude toward death, believing one would die when his time came regardless of where he might be. One wife, who could hardly bear to have her husband out of her sight, once upon a time announced to a friend her intention of accompanying him to sea in spite of the fact that the infant she was dandling on her knee was obviously not long for this world. In response to the question, "you are not going to take that sick child to sea?" she philosophically replied, "Oh, yes. We'll take plenty of salt along!"

An interesting story is told of one sea captain's wife who believed she had had a spiritualistic vision as to the time and place of her death which was to occur when she was sixty-two years of age. Stricken with yellow fever in a southern port, her nurse informed her she could not recover and asked her what message she would like to send North. Buoyed by her strong faith she replied, "I have no message to send. I will carry it myself." She



did. Another time when in danger of being lost at sea the mate said to her, "We shall never see land again." She answered, "You may not, but *I* shall." She did. Two years before her appointed time she began to make preparations for the end. When the eventful day arrived her sewing was all done and folded up, her knitting finished and the needles put away. With clasped hands she serenely sat and waited for the great moment. Relatives and friends bade her a tearful goodbye. One brother came from Massachusetts to join in the farewells. Wholly unmoved she sat and waited for her great rendezvous. Nothing happened. Evidently her vision had been misinterpreted. She lived to the ripe old age of ninety-three!

Although many a captain gallantly went down with his ship rather than desert her in her hour of peril, few welcomed the thought of a watery grave for their loved ones or themselves. Capt. "Will John" Singer preserved his wife's body in liquor and carried it about in the hold of his vessel several years until he had an opportunity to bring it back to Thomaston for burial.

Capt. David Oliver of the *Edward O'Brien* always kept aboard his vessel choice planks of Australian cedar which he would never allow to be used. When a doctor at St. Helena, into which port he put for medical advice, warned him that he had but a few days to live, he put to sea again hoping against hope the doctor was wrong. The doctor was right. The captain died within a few days. The ship's carpenter then fashioned a coffin and a coffin box of the choice planks. The captain's body, wrapped like a mummy in tarred sail cloth, was sealed in the coffin inside the box which was also sealed and further bound with iron bands. The remains, thus encased, weighed over one thousand pounds and were eventually interred in the Thomaston burying ground. Miss Alice Oliver, who had embarked upon her first sea voyage when she was only four, was with her father at the time. She had been his constant companion for ten years. As a pastime she had learned to box the compass, to take the sun at noon, to get the latitude, and again at three o'clock to determine the longitude. This knowledge stood her in good stead when the time came for her to take over the vessel and bring it into port.

When Capt. Frank Mehan's ship was at the Chincha Is-

lands loading guano, he, his son, and another Thomaston lad were drowned while fishing from a small boat. Their bodies were recovered and buried in the hold of another Thomaston vessel which had finished loading and was ready to sail. Thus temporarily embalmed, the bodies were taken to the port of the ship's destination, placed in metal caskets, and sent home for burial.

Sailors, when they died, were always buried at sea and it was not uncommon for masters and members of their families to meet the same fate. The body, wrapped and sewed in a weighted canvas shroud, was placed on a long plank and slid into the sea after the reading of the committal service. The service was usually read by the captain, but when one Thomaston captain died, his daughter, a girl of sixteen, performed that last sad rite. In addition to the thought of the dreadful oblivion of burial at sea was the terrible thought of one's body being devoured by sharks. It was not uncommon for sharks to appear about a vessel as soon as a man fell overboard, or soon after a body was lowered into the sea; and so superstitious are sailor-folk that they believed that in some mysterious way sharks had a premonition of impending death. The author remembers hearing her mother tell the story of the death and burial at sea of a Thomaston captain. The ending of the story was always the same, "And they said that sharks had been following the vessel for days and days!"

The author of "Fair Winds and Foul" describes the scant ceremony of a burial at sea and the immediate resumption of work in the following quatrain:

"Thus away our life doth glide  
The door, O Boatswain, open wide.  
Let him then in peace repose;  
The door, O Boatswain, you may close—  
Whew—ew—w (a whistle sounds): To work!"

When word came to Thomaston that a man had been lost at sea or had died and been buried at sea it was customary for his relatives and friends to hold a funeral service in his memory. In case of a shipwreck, sometimes it was months, sometimes years, before all hope for the return of the loved ones was abandoned. One young man, given up for lost after an absence of several



years, returned home, but no one was there to welcome him. Noticing that some sort of service was going on in the church he turned his steps thither. Slipping into a back seat, he soon found, to his great surprise, that he was attending his own funeral!

No matter how long a vessel might be at sea it was her captain's ambition to have her in the pink of condition when she made port. He eyed her as critically as does the modern woman her nose in her hand mirror, and kept her in constant repair with the same persistency. Not the slightest flaw escaped his eagle eye. Fortunately for his pride, by the time the vessel was nearing port after a long voyage the crew had become more or less inured to scrubbing, painting and polishing; and by the very reason of their efforts in that direction had begun to feel a proprietary interest in the ship itself. If the voyage were a homeward one then the men in their enthusiasm might give an extra swab to the decks or a more vigorous flourish as they polished the brasses. Orders were shouted more lustily, and so great a miracle will a little hope perform that the men came tumbling out of the fore-castle almost in anticipation of a call. Chanties—"a song was as good as ten men"—were sung with a will. The very air seemed electrified, so charged was it with the thought of "going home." And when

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed  
The lighthouse top I see?  
Is this the hill, is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own countree?"

was answered in the affirmative, the men could scarcely be restrained in their enthusiasm to get ashore. They would slide down a rope or leap into a boarding-house runner's boat when they knew by sad experience that it meant the briefest of brief shore leaves before they were perhaps being bludgeoned into consciousness again by another "bloody mate" aboard another vessel outward bound on another long cruise.

The captain and his family and the officers went ashore in more seemly fashion. The ship's business had to be attended to and plans made for the next voyage. Usually the captain and his

family visited a "photograph gallery" and sat for their pictures. The feminine members visited their dressmakers and milliners and then if they had no relatives or friends with whom they could visit made a bee-line for home. If the voyage were a successful one the captain sometimes received a present of three suits of clothes.

In some lines of endeavor a man may be eminently successful—possibly without ever being aware of it. He may even die, believing himself an abject failure, and yet future generations acclaim him a true success. The well worn joke about Columbus: "He didn't know where he was going, when he arrived he didn't know where he was, and when he returned he didn't know where he had been," was absolutely true. He died in chains. Yet, nobody to-day rates Columbus a failure. While that is all true of Columbus it does not and never did apply to the master mariner of a cargo vessel. He had to know where he was going, where he was when he arrived, and woe be unto him if he had not known where he had been when he got back. "Any port in a storm," yes; but the port to which he was chartered if he expected to keep his command.



## *Cap'n and Crew in Windjammer Days*

"NEVER SEE LIVERPOOL and die a fool!" was once upon a time a common saying along the wharves, in the ship yards, in the sail-lofts and at "the corner" in Thomaston, Maine. Anywhere and everywhere in the town old seafaring men with so many barnacles on their backs that they couldn't pull their shirts over their heads told tales and young men dreamed dreams. Not only Liverpool but every other well-known port in the whole wide world was a familiar subject of conversation. The topics of conversation and the stories were not the out-cropping of geographical knowledge acquired from newspapers, or the radio, or under duress from a text book while seated on a hard school bench. They were based on the more thrilling, if harder, school of experience aboard ship. No sailor was ever a full-fledged one until he had "rounded the Horn." Many a boy beheld that famous land mark before he saw Boston, Portland, or possibly Waldoboro twelve miles away. If he failed to make the famous loop he was dubbed a "packet-rat," a most ignominious epithet.

The boys were "half salt water" and their one ambition was to put their caps over the main truck of some ship. Some of them who by all rights of parentage and descent should have been natives of the town, had nothing but latitude and longitude for a birthplace. It is recorded in a certain family Bible: "Thomas G. born Dec. 8, 1885, on board Ship *Edward O'Brien* in the North Pacific Ocean *Lat 24:40; Long 128:55.*" Like Thomas many other boys were born at sea or in foreign ports. As small children they learned to walk aboard ship. If their mothers continued to go to sea on the long voyages the children usually went too, until it became imperative that they attend school. Then they were left at home with relatives or placed in private schools. Such an interim was usually of short duration. Hallet says that

the boys were "tossed out of the cradle into the rigging." It was almost that, for many, many boys began their seafaring careers when they were what we would now call "mere children" of twelve and fourteen years of age and oftentimes as young as ten or eleven!

Because of this early initiation into the mystery of the sea and the mastery of a ship, many boys became captains when they were lads of eighteen! Recently a retired master mariner was heard to disclaim any credit for juvenile precocity. He was old when he acquired a captain's berth. He was twenty-four! At fourteen he made his first voyage from Friendship to Wildcat, a distance of about ten miles. It was not a long voyage as the crow flies or the fish swims, but it was a beginning. At Wildcat the vessel loaded granite paving blocks for New York. In ten brief years that deck hand of fourteen was an "old man" of twenty-four, master of his own vessel! One could cite many cases of young men hardly more than boys placed in charge of ships for long and dangerous voyages. Captain "Bert" Williams was master of the *St. Paul* at the age of twenty-two. Captain John Wallace assumed command of the *J. B. Walker* when only nineteen. Captain James Watts had not reached his twentieth birthday when he took the *John T. Berry* around Cape Horn.

So great was the lure of the sea that few boys could resist it. Few were impressed into the service. More frequently they pestered their fathers and mothers until permission was granted or they ran away. It is told of one Thomaston boy, "Billy Mac" Hyler, that unknown to his mother he signed up for a berth on a new ship sailing for a distant port. In some roundabout way the mother learned of his intention and since in her mind a contract was a contract, not just a scrap of paper, she got his dunage ready. When the appointed day of sailing arrived the boy could not be found. A thorough search revealed him hiding under a bed. He was ignominiously dragged out by the heels and marched aboard ship to take the job for which he had signed up. He followed the sea thirty-six years, a master-mariner for many of them.

In his eagerness to get away and in his absorption after getting aboard ship, it didn't matter to one boy or even occur to him



to ask whither he was bound. He wrote the following letter to his anxious family back home: "Dear Father, dear Mother, dear sister, dear brother. We are bound to some place or other. Good-by, John."

To go back to "Billy Mac," as he was always called, he was one of a most remarkable family. His father was captain of a coasting vessel. His mother was a sister to the redoubtable Captain Simon *Shibles*. Three of his mother's sisters married sea captains. One of them, Harriet, married (in turn) the two sea-cap'ns who had fought as sailors on opposite sides at the battle between the *Boxer* and the *Enterprise*. His immediate family record reads as follows: "Hyler, Capt. Haunce R., born in Cushing, March 1790; married Mary Shibles, followed coasting and died '32. Their children 1, Capt. Dodge, born '18, lost at sea in '46; 2, Eliza M., born '19 married Capt. John M. Brown, died '56; 3, Helen A. born '21 married 1st, Capt. Simon B. Leeds of Warren (who was drowned at N. O. '42) 2nd, Capt. Rasmus Anderson (who was lost overboard in the Atlantic Ocean); 4, Capt. Alden B. born '22, died in Liverpool, Eng. in '55; 5, Priscilla born '24 married Capt. John Brown (sister's husband) 6, Capt. William ("Billy Mac") born '26; 7, Capt. J. Burnham, born '28, died of yellow fever in Havana, Cuba; 8, Margaret G. born '29, married Capt. John Norebeck of Denmark, who died in Mobile, Ala. in '56; 9, Capt. Ballard G. born '31, resided in Thomaston, a master mariner."

Every son a captain; every daughter a captain's wife!

In spite of the fascination for the sea many boys probably embarked upon their venture with mental reservations or were speedily disillusioned soon after sailing. After once casting off, however, there was no retreat and there was no other course but to grin and bear it. No matter how great a green horn a boy might be when he first signed up, he was forced immediately to "learn the ropes" and meet the stern requirements of the ship's regime. The picturesque and usually profane vocabulary of the bo'sun or mate attended to that, stiffening his knees and strengthening his arms whenever his zeal flagged a bit. Then, too, there was always the question in the boy's mind as to what the girls back home would say should he quit. Every boy wanted to be a

hero to the girls and his yellow streak, if he had one, was concealed with all the bravado at his command.

One year a new ship, the *St. Charles*, Capt. Colley, was ready to sail from Thomaston for a voyage to San Francisco. There was keen competition among the boys for berths on her. One youth tried to bribe another named "Mike" to sell him his berth for ten dollars. Nothing doing. "Mike" wanted it himself. In anticipation of the great privilege that was to be his, "Mike" went aboard ship one afternoon and started to do some tidying up. He had swept up the top of the forward house and had his dirt in a heap when he discovered that his shovel was down on the main deck beside the hatch and almost under the heels of the captain who was talking to a group of other captains. The captain was a very dignified man; the loss of one eye only adding to the austerity of his appearance. In his ignorance of seafaring ways "Mike" politely asked the captain to pass up the shovel! "Mike" said when the captain cocked up his good eye at him he knew at once that he didn't want to go around the "Horn" with that man. So he sought out the boy who had offered him ten dollars for his berth. After some dickering the boy whipped out a dollar bill, promising to pay the balance later. "Mike" took the dollar and never repined although he never got the balance.

Another boy, a bewildered stranger on shipboard, asked the captain, "How do you get down cellar, mister?" Put yourself in his place when the captain got through with him.

The story is told of a Thomaston lad who had signed up as an "A. B.," short for able-bodied seaman, aboard a vessel bound round the Horn. It was his first seafaring venture. As the ship was weighing anchor preparatory to sailing he was taken down into the chain locker to help the bo'sun stow away the chain cable. The chain had to be stowed back and forth carefully so that when at some later time the anchor was let go the chain would not foul but run out smoothly. The chain was heavy. It was a dirty, hard job. The boy was unused to such strenuous labor, but he did as the bo'sun told him, without complaint. When the anchor was hove short they came up on deck to wait with the others of the crew for the tug-boat. As soon as the tug arrived the bo'sun sang out, "Come on, —, down in the



locker again to finish our job!" "Not on your life!" was the astonishing reply, "let somebody else help this time!" Even the hard boiled bo'sun almost swallowed his tongue. What he said when he recovered his senses tradition does not say, but needless to say the boy did go down into the locker and he finished the task with greater alacrity than he began it. That was the boy's first lesson on ship board. Thereafter he obeyed and held his tongue first, last, and always.

A young boy who signed up to "go cook" had no soft berth either. Just as picturesque and just as profane language could be leveled at him as at the greenhorn before the mast. The cook was at an even greater disadvantage than the deck hand for, whereas the latter usually came in chiefly for condemnation from his superiors, the former was subject also to the ragging and vituperation of his comrades if his culinary efforts fell below par.

The crew of a small craft once threatened to throw one young cook overboard if he offered them a second serving of gingerbread no better than his first. Cooking being considered an effeminate occupation and a chore that anybody could do, boys of fourteen and fifteen without any previous experience whatever were often engaged as cooks on the small coasters. One boy of thirteen "went cook" on a coasting vessel, the *Golden Rule*, which was one hundred and fifty days on the round trip from Tenants Harbor, Maine, to New York. It was the cook's first voyage but the captain's last. Capt. John Maloney "went cook" with his father when only ten. His cooking evidently did not undermine his own constitution for he lived beyond eighty years to tell the tale. When an interviewer gasped at the statement and asked what he could cook at that age, he drolly remarked, "I don't rightly remember, but they ate it and it kept me alive."

While the cook "rassled" with the lowly pots and pans and contended with the galley stove, his service though not so hazardous as going aloft or crawling out on the yard arms and bowsprit to reef sail, was an important one and called for considerable courage. Everybody aboard ship depended upon mess to keep him "ship shape." While supplies were usually limited both as to quantity and to variety appetites were keen and capacity almost boundless. It was no mean stunt to feed a crew of hungry

sailors even when the cook was an expert. When he was a novice the responsibility must have been almost overwhelming. It is claimed that the expression, "Not worth a Hannah Cook" had a maritime origin. A superfluous fellow aboard ship who was neither a diligent hand nor a capable cook, was "neither a hand nor a cook." This common expression finally simmered down to "Not worth a Hannah Cook."

The sailor's bill of fare consisted chiefly of food that would "stick to the ribs"—hard tack, first, last and always; salt beef, salt pork, salt fish, potatoes, beans, peas, rice, dried-apple sauce, pork fat (no butter), duff, and molasses for sweetening. Now one can see at a glance that almost anybody with average intelligence could boil salt beef, salt fish and potatoes and occasionally vary them by serving hash. There was a concoction, in sailor parlance called "scouse," that must have depended to considerable extent upon the proportion of its ingredients for its palatability. It was made of salt beef, salt pork, potatoes, onion and hard tack all boiled together! Beans and peas were served in soup. Plain duff was served on week days, plum duff on Sundays and holidays.

On small vessels the officers and crew fared the same. One stormy night on one small Thomaston coaster several of the crew had assembled in the galley for warmth and companionship. The cook was preparing supper. To make the stove draw better he had taken out the pan of ashes and set it on the galley floor. Much good natured bantering was going on. While the cook was apparently diverted, one of the men slyly scooped up a handful of ashes and dropped them into the biscuit dough. Nonchalantly the cook kept on stirring, saying, "That's all right. You'll have to eat it just the same." And he did. Ship board was no place for anybody with "a *daintie* or *queazie* stomach."

The world, so far as the doughnut is eaten, is indebted to a young boy, Hanson Gregory, a native of Knox County. He had signed up to "go cook" on a vessel. Before leaving home he took a few lessons in cooking. While watching his mother fry doughnuts he noticed that while the outsides of the doughnuts were done the centers were often raw. He suggested making a hole in the center. The success of his suggestion was immediately apparent. From that time on it became so widely accepted a form



that now all that some pessimistic souls can see in the doughnut is the hole. A bronze marker commemorating his invention has recently been set on his birthplace. As a child, the author went aboard her uncle's vessel tied up at the wharf in Thomaston. The cook pulled open a drawer that was full of doughnuts and asked her to take one. As she was about to do so an older sister nudged her and shook her head saying, "I wouldn't take one. A man made them."

The cook was an important member of the ship's crew. His berth might be the lowest rung in the ladder, yet by it he got a toe-hold from which he might work his way to the position of second mate, then to first mate, and finally to become master of a ship. It was possible to do this because, although his first duty was in the galley, the cook was called upon, as were the carpenter and sailmaker, to go aloft in time of emergency or when the rest of the crew were exhausted from a prolonged bout with wind and weather. In recognition of that fact, cooks who have served on sailing vessels are eligible to admission to Sailor's Snug Harbor, while those serving in similar capacity under steam are debarred.

It has been said that while love of adventure or travel lured a boy to sea, it was only ambition or rum that kept him there. The unfortunate lad who succumbed to the latter seldom got beyond the fo'c'sle and often ended his days as a downright "bum" or "wharf rat," a human derelict. Ruled by ambition, the "AB" usually found ways to distinguish himself and to rise by gradual stages from his berth before the mast to that of bo'sun, third mate, second mate, mate, and finally master. The master who made this gradual ascent was said to have come in "through the hawse-hole." If by favoritism or family relationship he was given command without graduating from the school of hard knocks, he was said to have come in "through the cabin window." Those who arrived by the latter route were usually given a mate who was fully competent to manage the ship and who showed the captain how to navigate. Under such an arrangement the captain was said to have a "nurse," a maritime version of the "back seat driver"—humiliating for all concerned.

Whether the captain gained his position by a gradual rise by

way of the galley or the fo'c'sle, or by the more rapid route through the cabin window his position was always a trying one and one of great responsibility. Errors of judgment in navigating could neither be glossed over nor concealed; no alibis could be offered. No matter what the wind or the weather, no matter how rough the sea there was the performance of his ship to show for his judgment or lack of it. Bravado and whisky might tide a captain over a time, but in the long run these never satisfactorily took the place of sound, sober judgment. Owners partial to the captain sometimes allowed him to retain his command after his reputation for sobriety and sound judgment was a subject of debate, but his incapacity always caught up with him. It first revealed itself to his harshest critics, the men in the fo'c'sle of his own vessels; then to every man he hailed as a brother captain in a foreign port; and, finally, to the arbiters of his fate, the owners back home.

The majority of Thomaston captains were more than mere officers. As a rule they were also "part owners." The construction of a vessel was usually financed by a sale of shares—sixty-four shares to each vessel. While there was nothing to prevent the builders or captain from owning the entire vessel, according to custom, the ownership of eight shares constituted the controlling part. If a captain could finance that many he was sure of his command and it was unnecessary for him to tie up more capital. Other "part-owners" were foremen of the various construction units who were required to "take a share," and local capitalists who were willing to take a chance for the possible rich returns from "vessel property." Such investments were hazardous because insurance rates were so high that for most holders insurance was prohibitive. Captains did sometimes sail on a monthly basis, but a man worthy of his hire was not satisfied unless the vessel, his "command," was literally as well as figuratively his.

The story is told of a certain "young man of fifty" who cast a covetous eye on the "vessel property" owned by a wealthy widow of eighty. He set about getting control of her shares in an honorable way—by the matrimonial route. When he thought he had sufficiently won his way into the lady's good graces he



came out boldly with a proposal of marriage. The keen-witted old lady listened calmly but declined saying, "Having brought up one family I don't feel like going through all that again."

"At our time of life I don't think there would be much danger of that," the anxious suitor replied.

Quick as a flash came back the retort, "Many a fine ship has been lost by saying 'there is no danger.' "

In addition to navigation there was another problem confronting the captain and that was discipline. That, like the art of navigation, was a matter of eternal vigilance. While the policy of ship discipline was determined by the captain, it was the mate who put the policy into execution. Scorning psychology, he commonly depended upon profanity, fisticuffs, and his boot to elucidate his orders. The average crew accepted this regime as a matter of course. There were no seamen's unions in the olden days and "sailor's rights" were scarcely dreamed of. When a man signed up he knew he was pledging himself to obedience to the master's will whether that was reasonable and humane or the reverse. If a vessel had the reputation of being a "blood-boat," as some did, they were naturally avoided by any sailor who was not a bum or hardened beyond human sensibility. Cases of insubordination or mutiny, like similar crimes ashore, were the exception rather than the rule; otherwise few ships would have made port. As has been said, the ability to maintain discipline was in importance almost equal to that of ability to navigate the ship. Notwithstanding the severe and oftentimes brutal treatment of the crew, every last man was usually intensely interested that "his ship," on which he was generally betting, should beat its rivals and make a record run.

Charles R. Flint describes the selection of a crew for the ship of his uncle, Captain James Chapman; "I remember one moonlight night I went down the bay with him on the *St. John*, one of the largest of American sailing ships. He kept the tug alongside so I could see the mates choose sailors for their watches, which they did alternately, one by one. On the deck immediately in front of the cabin, the top of which served as a bridge, the first mate's watch lined up on the starboard, and the second mate's watch on the port side. As soon as the first mate, "Dave"

Rivers, reported that the watches were complete, my Uncle James stepped to the rail and made this speech: 'Boys, there are two ways aboard this ship, a smooth way and a rough way. If you take the smooth way, it will be very smooth; and if you choose the rough way it will be damned rough!' Instead of waiting for applause, he ended his speech abruptly with the command: "That'll do—the watch below!" I never heard of an instance when the rough way was chosen."

Captain Chapman was an efficient master and a man of great initiative and originality. On one of his voyages most of his sailors deserted. The captain bought two ponies to swing the yards and hoist the sails. At the *Chincha* Islands the ponies were used to assist in loading the vessel. At the port of Callao the captain sold the ponies at a profit and took on a full crew for his ship.

When a vessel had once left dock, refusal to work or to obey orders constituted mutiny. In the days of sailing ships the captain's word was law and there was little hope of redress to be had for the complaining sailor when the vessel reached port. Whatever the outcome of the disobedience, whether the sailor won or whether he lost, he was the loser. If he lost in the struggle he was a mutineer and could be punished. If he won and took command of the vessel he was a pirate and an outlaw with all that that entailed. The cards were all stacked against the sailor and he knew it. The cases which did reach court were usually dismissed for lack of evidence, or the judge would rule that the acts of captain or mate were necessary for the protection of life and property. It is rumored, however, that one Thomaston captain did serve a brief term in a French prison and pay a heavy fine for shooting several drunken sailors.

If conditions became so bad that the fight was for life or the control of the ship, then the law of self defense or protection of property could be invoked. The story is told of a Captain Baker of the ship *Young America* who was obliged to seize an axe and kill five members of a mutinous crew in self defense. The others surrendered. When the ship reached Liverpool the captain was praised by the court for the courageous way in which he had protected the property entrusted to his care.

In his own way the skipper of a New England whaler quelled



mutiny on his ship in the good old days: The skipper levelled his glance at the ring leader, strode slowly up to him, grasped him firmly by the seat of the pants and his coat collar, deliberately walked him to the rail and in dead silence, lifted him high above his head and threw him into the sea.

In August, 1868 Capt. Edwin S. Watts of the ship *L. B. Gillchrest* upon his arrival at Bombay, India, received the following communication:

U. S. Consulate at Bombay  
24th August, 1868

Captain Watts,  
American Ship  
*L. B. Gillchrest,*

Dear Sir:

I shall feel obliged for any assistance you can give Capt. Mills of the American Ship *Montpelier* in putting his crew in irons and keeping them in order

I remain,  
Yours faithfully  
Geo. A. Attredge,  
Consul U. S. America."

With all possible speed Capt. Watts hurried to aid his fellow townsman. Boarding the vessel he greeted the captain heartily. While carrying on a bluff conversation, the two artfully managed to edge their way farther and farther forward where the rebellious members of the crew were idling about. When they had advanced far enough to cover the men Capt. Watts whipped out two pistols. Capt. Mills then called to the mate and in a trice the men were subdued and in irons.

When a few Negroes on the *J. B. Thomas*, Capt. Turner, started a riot one night, "Parpie" Watts, the mate, a Thomaston man, went forward with something that looked like a bush-scythe. Just at the sight of him the men fell as flat as new mown hay. "Parpie" is said to have been a very capable mate. At any rate he must have been a resourceful one to even think of taking a scythe to seal

It was the duty of the first mate to carry out the captain's

orders. He was at once mouthpiece and executor. The second mate was chosen largely for his ability to handle men. He was supposed to be able to come out on top in any encounter he might have with a member of the crew. If he was worsted in the fight the chances were he would be demoted and the victor appointed as second mate in his place.

Thus the mate was almost invariably an illustration of the survival of the fittest. He began life as cabin boy, cook, or what is more likely, as a youngster before the mast. Gradually, sometimes rapidly, he fought his way up to an officer's position. If he incurred the ill-will of members of the crew he did well to beware of a knife in the dark or some heavy object dropped from the rigging. The mate needed steady nerves—many a one of them helped achieve this desired end by keeping a cud of chewing tobacco in his mouth. A certain mate, who had been so unfortunate as to lose an eye and was commonly called "glass-eye Mitchell," had a handy substitute. When excited and out of tobacco he would take out his glass eye and hold that in his mouth!

Some mates and some ships were notorious for brutal treatment of the crew. Belaying pins and brass knuckles or "knuckle dusters" as they were called were frequently used to keep the crew in subjection. Sometimes sailors were lashed to the shrouds in spread eagle fashion and beaten unmercifully. Ships aboard which the officers were especially cruel were known as "blood boats" or "hell ships." Discipline on clipper ships was particularly strict. When the captain gave an order the men ran to obey or they were knocked across the deck by the mate with a belaying pin.

"It was larboard and starboard, get aft to the poop,  
And I'll help you along with the toe of my boot.  
Yo, ho, knock a man down."

The *Edward O'Brien II*, called "the big Edward," to distinguish it from another smaller ship also named *Edward O'Brien*, suffered from a series of brutal or "bucko" mates. The Red Record published in San Francisco printed the following items concerning relations of officers and crew:



*“Edward O’Brien, Capt. —, arrived in San Francisco, February 1890. First mate Gillespie is charged with most inhuman conduct. He knocked down the second mate and jumped on his face. Struck one seaman on the head with a belaying-pin, inflicting a ghastly wound, then kicked him on the head and ribs, inflicting life marks. He struck another man on the neck with a capstan bar, then kicked him into insensibility. Struck the boatswain in the face because the latter failed to hear an order. Gillespie charged and admitted to bail.”*

*“Edward O’Brien, Captain —, arrived in San Francisco, May 1892. First and second mates, Carey and True, began to ‘make things lively’ as soon as the ship sailed from New York. Crew complained, and the first mate swore he would subdue all hands before they reached Cape Horn. Second mate True offered to fight any three men in the forecastle; one man accepted the challenge. Second mate retreated aft, seized a belaying-pin, and with the assistance of the cook, steward and carpenter knocked down three men and placed them in double irons. One man, who was knocked senseless, was dragged into the cabin where the second mate kicked him in the face and body as long as he could swing his foot. Captain protested against the brutality, but the mate paid no attention. Men were assaulted with belaying-pins every day. Ship leaking badly off the Horn; men had to be constantly at the pumps in cold and wet weather. Crew said they would spend all their wages in having the mates punished. Mates disappeared and were not punished.”*

For many years the members of the crews which manned Thomaston ships were Thomaston men or men from neighboring towns. As the latter half of the last century approached, native sons began to give way to foreigners as crews of the sailing ship. Captains and owners were not willing to pay wages that would induce the Yankee to stay with the ship. But a crew had to be found by hook or crook. Various and devious ways were employed to round up a crew. From sailors’ boarding house from agents some of whom were known as “crimps,” men of all nationalities and of all occupations or none were secured to man the ships.

In Liverpool there was an enterprising agent who rigged up a

ship's wheel in his back yard. Lying in wait for passers by he would speak with any likely prospect. He would invite him in, show him how easy it was to steer a vessel simply by turning the wheel this way and that, put a plug of tobacco in the man's pocket and offer him a drink. When the man was later kicked into consciousness by a "bloody mate" he found himself virtually a slave aboard a vessel bound for "the Lord knows where."

Often shanghaing was resorted to. A cobbler stepping to a bar to take a drink might wake up next day at sea and not get back to his business for months. On one occasion a workman, walking along a water-front street with a quantity of glass under his arm, was accosted by a ship's officer and asked to come aboard to do some work. On the way to the ship he was given a drugged cigar and was kicked and cuffed throughout the whole voyage for presuming to impose himself as an able seaman. In the words of the old chanty:

"There were tinkers and tailors and sailors and all,  
With a yeo—ho! we'll blow the man down!  
That shipped for good seamen on board the Black Ball,  
Give us some time to blow the man down!"

The Black Ball Line was a famous fleet of packet ships running chiefly from New York to Liverpool. It's house-flag was a black ball on a blue field. Every packet of the line flew the house flag and had a huge black ball painted on the "bunt" of its foretopsail. The sailors of the line were known as "Blackballers." According to the late "Ed" Burgess of Thomaston they were a rum-soaked, hard-fisted class of men who would fight at the drop of a hat, had no outfit of clothes, and changed ship at every port of call, always shipping by the run. They simply worked a ship from one port to another and were over the bows with what little outfit they had the moment the vessel touched the pier head or before. Great sailors, and after the rum was out of them usually as resolute as a captain could wish, but when drunk, oh, boy! Since the "Blackballers" were not "Cape Horners" they were also called "Packet Rats."

"Flying Fish Sailors" got their name from a line running to the East and to the East Indies. They were super-de-luxe sailors.



As in other social groups their status was based partly on the possessions of worldly goods. "Flying Fish Sailors" were credited with not being wholly dependent on the ship's "slop-chest." They usually went aboard provided with at least a "donkey's breakfast" (bedtick with more or less straw in it), a suit of oil-skins, and a pair of seaboots. "Cape Horners" and "Flying Fish Sailors" looked down their noses at "Packet Rats."

Hell ships had to pay heavy "blood money" in order to secure a crew. A Bath, Maine ship, the *St. Paul*, with a Thomaston captain, was lying in San Francisco loaded with grain for Liverpool and needed only a crew. Her second mate was an Austrian named Martin. The reputation of the ship was such that it was shunned by even the most reckless seamen. In desperate need of one more man to complete the crew an agent or crimp of the port managed to capture and dope a Baptist minister who happened to be walking along the street. Next day the minister awoke to find himself clothed in dungarees and on the *St. Paul* sailing out of the Golden Gate. He was roused by a kick in the ribs, by the blitz-krieging "Bucko" Martin, who shouted, "Minister or Saint—hell! up you get and work!" And soon the sky pilot was learning the ropes. The ship reached Liverpool in about one hundred days where the shanghaied clergyman received money from his friends to return him to his parish. He undoubtedly gained valuable experience from the trip even though it was taken against his will.

Crimps and boarding-house runners of San Francisco in the Eighties and Nineties sometimes boldly transferred whole crews from one vessel to another. It happened once to two Maine vessels, one the *Joseph B. Thomas*, Cap'n "Bill" Lermond, of Thomaston. The *Thomas* reached San Francisco and anchored near the *John McDonald*, Cap'n Storer. Hardly had the anchor touched bottom before the ship was boarded by crimps who "treated" the sailors and offered them work ashore. As a result nearly all the crew left the ship bag and baggage. Like most human beings the men didn't know when they were well off. The *Joseph B. Thomas*, under Capt. Lermond, was a "happy ship," for he was one of the kindest of ship masters, and would allow no belaying pin or knuckle-duster methods of discipline aboard.

The wives of the captains, Mrs. Lermond and Mrs. Storer, were relatives. On the morning following their arrival Mrs. Lermond was rowed over to the *John McDonald* to make a call. What was her astonishment on reaching the ship's deck to find practically all the former crew of the *Thomas* being bundled aboard by the crimps. Most of the men were drugged or drunk. Two, however, were sufficiently alert to object vigorously to their treatment. They were quickly subdued with knuckle-dusters by the runners. The *John McDonald* shortly after weighed anchor, but it was a half hearted crew that wearily chanted "Good-bye, fare you well, Juliana, my dear" as they stumbled round and round the capstan. Not only were they outward bound on another long voyage, but they knew they would pay dearly for their folly. The compensation of the agents or crimps was several months' pay of each man advanced by the captain of a ship thus provided with a crew.

A captain was lucky if a crew obtained in this fashion included a real sailor or two. If the crew lagged or seemed to shirk it was often because they did not know a capstan from a jib, or understand orders. In many cases they did not even understand the English language. No doubt this condition was responsible for a good deal of the brutal treatment of the crew. Leave it to the mate; he'd "learn 'em." Morison has said that ship owners could have had Yankee seamen if they had been willing to pay, but that "like the mill owners they preferred cheap foreigners."

Cap'n "Dave" Rivers of the *A. G. Ropes*, a "professing Christian," was at one time the author's Sunday School teacher. While en route from 'Frisco to Liverpool (1890) he wrote a friend: "First two weeks at sea usually the hardest. I have a new set of 'Dagoes' to get under discipline. Whether I am a good fellow or not, have to act the part of a tyrant. If one used foreign element halfway decent, would have charge of ship in no time. Thirty-four souls aboard, providing all the sailors possess souls! Family, mate, sailmaker only Americans. Second mate, Swede; third mate, Scotch; bo'sun, Irish; carpenter, Danish; steward, German; cook, Irish; crew, everything even to Maltese. (Evidently Cap'n Rivers epithet, "Dagoes," was an all inclusive one.) Seventeen able bodied seamen, only four of whom can do a decent job of rigging.



Disrated several who claimed to be able bodied reducing pay from \$20 to \$15 a month." The previous crew just before going ashore had "cut sails and rigging, knocked holes in the water-cocks and *done* other damage that would nt be discovered" until they were ashore and until it would work some inconvenience to the master.

Cap'n Rivers, who prided himself on going aloft as well as being on deck, unlike most captains regularly inspected every inch of rigging and sails, watching for slack rope, loose knots and chafing: "On every outward passage had every piece of running gear brought aft and passed every foot of it through own hands." He believed that \$25,000 or \$30,000 worth of sails and rigging was worth looking out for and that "when the 'old man' is known to go aloft the crew is more careful." Knowing his habits, the departing crew, evidently decided to make his inspection worth while. When the mischief was discovered the culprits were beyond his reach, but the new crew had to "pay for it." When the watch on deck failed to step-lively during a heavy squall Cap'n Rivers got down on deck and knocked them helter-skelter. In so doing he put his thumb out of joint and sprained an ankle—a taste of his own medicine.

For many years there was a combined sailor's boarding house and shipping agency in Rockland, Maine. The wife of the proprietor, a woman with whom no sailor, not even a drunken one would dare play horse, used to deliver whole crews to waiting vessels anywhere within driving distance of that seaport. Being a skilled horsewoman, she did her own driving. Although her hands were occupied in holding the reins, the sailors knew she was armed and did not question her ability to drive and shoot at the same time, so she usually accomplished her errand without incident. It is told that once when delivering a crew to a vessel waiting at a Thomaston wharf she gave them each the "once over" before they went up the gang-plank. It was a cold, wintry day and one man had on a pair of mittens. Snatching them off his hands and throwing them into the water she said, "No mittens or umbrellas on ship board."

How blood once ran in the scuppers of a ship many years ago has been told by a Thomaston sailor who was aboard her as an

"A. B." He had shipped from New York to Plymouth, England, whence he made his way to London to work a passage home. The most promising prospect was a Nova Scotia vessel. It offered only "two *pun*, ten" a month, but he was anxious to get back, so he signed up on her. Although a month's wages had been advanced to him all he had in his jeans when he went aboard was a "'alf crown."

The rest of the crew, made up almost wholly of "Blackballers," including a big bully, a raw-boned Scotchman with a glass eye, named "Tom," soon followed. They were nearly all "as drunk as lords" and couldn't or wouldn't turn to. The few who were sober, straightened things out as well as they could, got the ship out of the dock, and, with the aid of a tug, started her down the river. It is some distance from London to the mouth of the Thames estuary and before that was reached Tom revived sufficiently to proclaim himself "bully" of the fo'c'sle.

One of his first acts after issuing his proclamation was to kick open a well-filled chest belonging to a Finnish member of the crew and appropriate a "red Havre shirt" he found there. Protests from the owner and others of the crew were of no avail. A fight ensued. The "bully" came off victorious and defiantly donned the shirt as a "red badge of courage." The fight was on for the remainder of the voyage.

As they encountered steady sou'westerly winds on the passage they were obliged to tack ship nearly every dog watch. Tom and the sailor from Thomaston were in the mate's watch. In tacking the two were stationed for'ard to trim down the jib sheets. It would have been very easy to "fall" overboard from the topgallant fo'c'sle. One day as the two were hauling aft the sheets after tacking, Tom, while seemingly holding his turn, purposely let the turn slip as the other "surged." Because he was on the lookout for that sort of thing, the Thomaston boy was not taken completely unawares and managed to save himself. The mate heard the great thrashing and the banging and came running forward to see what was the matter. Under his watchful eye the "son-of-a-gun" quit his "monkey shines" and turned the trick as capably as he knew how.

Soon after there came an opportunity to get even. Mess was



always served in the fo'c'sle. As soon as the pan of food was set on the floor (there was no table) Tom gluttonously helped himself before allowing the others to have more than a smell. Since he was the "bully" he was also the Emily Post of the fo'c'sle and as such was meekly followed by his buddies. Rules of dining etiquette have been known to raise ructions in the breasts of persons moving in circles far above the fo'c'sle of a ship—even Alice Roosevelt Longworth and the late "Dolly" Gann had a delightful scrap over that very thing, precedence. Such being the case what could one expect from tired, hungry sailors, squatting on the floor of a ship's fo'c'sle waiting their turn to dip into the pan of mush, hash, or *lobscouse*? It was only natural that the men should be filled with growing resentment and try to get even.

One morning the pan of mush, a little hotter than usual, was set on the floor. The "bully" waited a bit for it to cool, whereupon the member from Thomaston courageously dipped in and helped himself. Wrathfully Tom "scooches" down to push the intruder aside. While he was thus off balance, the other dashed his serving of hot mush squarely in his face. Before he could open his eyes or get his balance they all pitched in and gave him "one of the biggest lickings of his sinful career." It goes without saying that nobody had any breakfast that day, but the Finn got back his "red Havre shirt" and there was comparative peace in the fo'c'sle for the remainder of the voyage.

In due time the vessel arrived at quarantine in New York and came to anchor. The "Old Man" went ashore. Soon after a boarding-house runner came alongside. The sailors in their desire to get off the ship immediately grabbed what little dunnage they had, tossed it into the boat, threw a rope over the side and began to slide down. When the mate saw what was happening he grabbed a belaying pin and began to lay the men out. It was his duty to keep the crew aboard to help dock the vessel and he was acting within the law in using his authority to do so. The first victim of his onslaught was Tom who "bled like a stuck pig." In the course of the melee down went the second mate and some others, "great time that to pay off old scores, you know."

Several of the bleeding men managed to go over the side and were in the boat with the runner when the sailorman from

Thomaston decided to join them. As he was sliding down, somebody, possibly the mate, cut the rope and he fell "ker plunk," knocking everybody in the boat "galley west." Quickly disentangling themselves they "pulled for the shore" as fast as they could go.

Anticipating the need for carfare the man from Thomaston invited the crowd into a saloon for a drink. He still had his 'alf crown in his jeans and the saloon was the only place where he could get it changed. In the course of time the narrator of the tale got back to Thomaston. What became of his fo'c'sle comrades he never learned. For aught he or we shall ever know their spirits may be "Blackballing" yet, their blood still running red in the scuppers of phantom ships.

"I'd like to ship off-shore again upon  
some Bluenose Barque,  
And shout a sailor chanty in the  
windy, starry dark."

The sailor's work on a sailing ship was hard and dangerous. He was obliged to go far aloft in rain, snow or sleet with the wind blowing a fierce gale, the vessel rolling and pitching, and the masts describing great circles all the while. Every finger was a hook either to keep himself from falling or to bring sails and lines into the desired place. Every movement of his body had to lend itself to the swaying of the masts and yards and the slatting of the sails. The firmness of his grasp must equal the reach of his arms if he hoped to avoid falling into the sea or to the deck many feet below.

One of his duties was to go aloft with a bucket of grease and "slush down" the masts—a slippery, slimy, smelly job—or climb to the masthead with a bucket of tar and smear it over the shrouds and the rigging with a wad of oakum. There were times in the performance of the latter task, when, according to Dana, "you have to hang on with your eyelids and tar with your hands," yet not a drop of tar must be spilled nor a spot left uncovered.

At no time was there any semblance of the comforts of home for the sailor. The forecastle, necessarily small, was crowded, with absolutely no privacy. The sailor's bunk was narrow and hard,



often water soaked. Even if dry, oftentimes he had to share it with very lively bed-fellows, what the French call "camerade de lit"—comrades of the bed. One Thomaston lad declared that on one trip so numerous were they that he was actually "kicked out of his bunk" by them. It must have been a good bed, better than the ordinary "donkey's breakfast" for so many bedbugs, especially such vigorous ones, could not possibly have been wrong. That must have been the lad's first experience at sea, for it's a well known truth that "A man is no sailor if he cannot sleep when he turns in, and turn out when he's called."

After a severe storm and during heavy seas all clothing was usually water soaked and could not be dried till fair weather appeared, frequently a matter of weeks. For the sailor boy there certainly was no peace here and no peace there. Whether his bunk was wet or whether it was dry,

It was Bundle out, my bullies, and we'll  
give the sheets a pull;  
It was ease her off a little, till the top  
sails stand rap full,  
It was scrub the decks, my Jackies, and  
we'll take the sun at noon;  
It was Sou-sou-west-half south, my boy,  
beneath the southern moon.

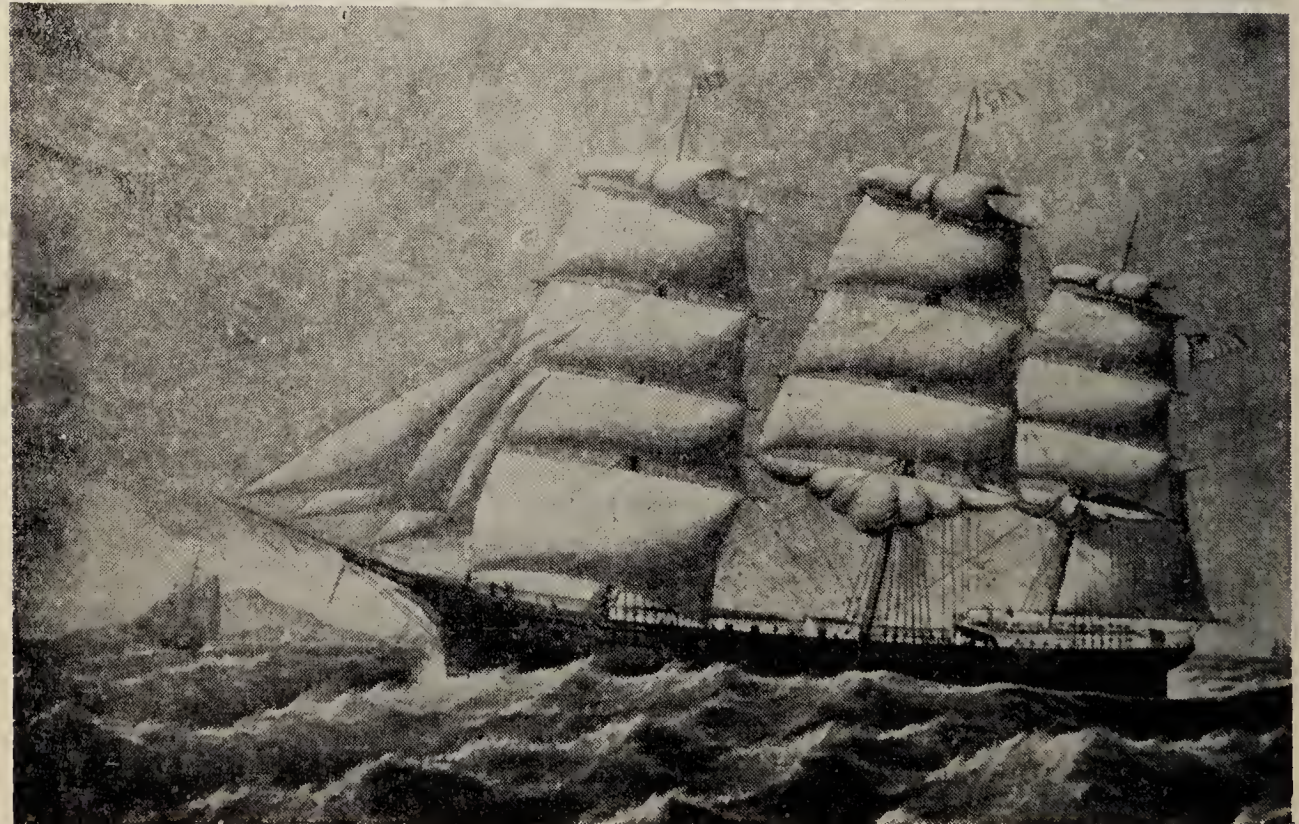
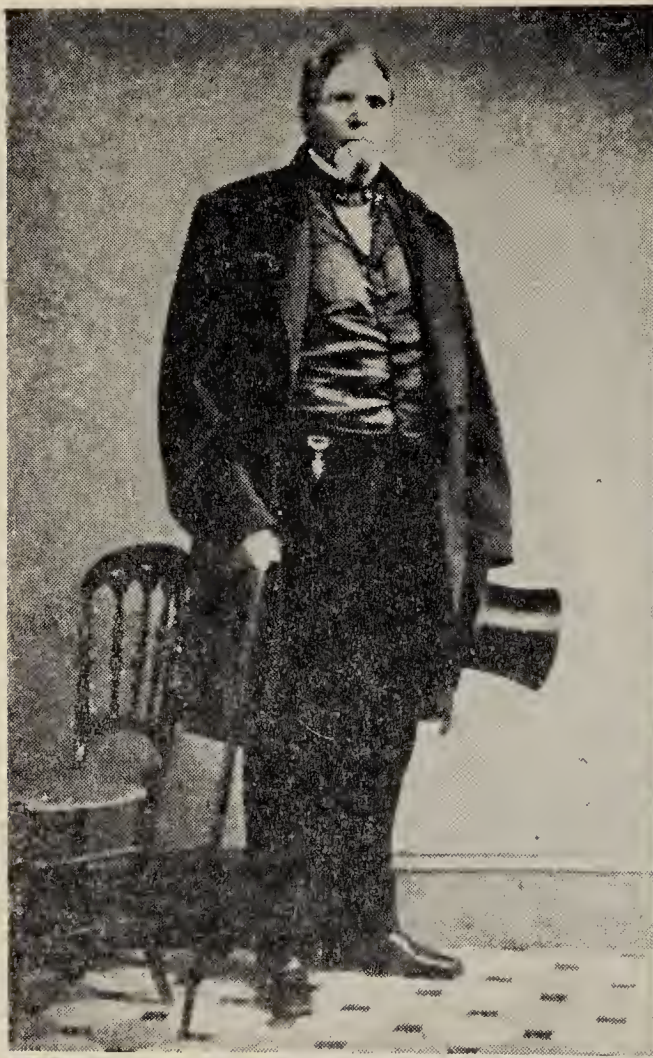
One of the greatest antidotes for unrest or mischief of any kind is work—work—and more work. At sea as well as on land "Satan can find work for idle hands to do." In thinking up arduous or time-consuming tasks the officers of American sailing ships had Satan "skun a mile." His ship was the pride of the master's heart. First, last and always it had to be kept "ship-shape." There is no other expression so all inclusive of absolute order and thorough cleanliness. His standards were inbred, the standards of his Yankee mother in her Yankee home where everything was "scrubbed to death," not only the superficial and outward side, but, "each minute and unseen part, for the gods see everywhere."

Regardless of the nature of the cargo, the decks had to be holy-stoned, oiled, the seams coated with tar and then the decks scrubbed until they fairly shone. Woe be to the man caught spitting tobacco juice or dripping paint on the deck of a "Down



Top: Capt. "Bill" Lermond of the *Thomas*, and officers. Bottom: Schooner *Joseph B. Thomas* at wharf in Bristol, England. Flags are at half mast because of President McKinley's death.





Top: Capt. Harvey Snow and Lucinda Morton Snow showing dress of the 60's. Bottom: Barque *Pactolus*, built at Thomaston, 1865.



Easter." The thrifty Yankees often used Bibles and religious tracts as utensils for scrubbing. Since they were certain of a fresh supply when they docked again they could use them without stint. Missionaries would have been heart-broken had they known that the tracts intended to remove stains from the souls of the crew were used to remove spots from the ship's deck.

There was one Thomaston mariner, Cap'n "Ed" Masters, who took exception to this almost unanimous passion for bright and shining surfaces. He went to the other extreme and blackened every vessel under his command with what he called "good old British paint"—tar. It is recorded that "when he took over the command of the *Baring Brothers* he had all the beautiful white paint scraped off her deck-houses, bulwarks, etc., and soaked the whole ship in Stockholm tar until she was as black as a coal pit inside and out. Her top-sides were tarred down to the copper, and on deck even her waterways received a good coating." He did it as a matter of economy—to save his paint bill.

To quote Cap'n Rivers again: "In addition to sailing have made upper and lower mizzen top-sails and repaired several sails, scrubbed all the paint work, cleaned and oiled the decks and tops of houses, repaired all the *chafes* aloft, now pumice-stoning the ship on the outside and tarring the rigging . . . began painting ship to-day—white inside. Lower masts pumice-stoned—smooth as a table-top."

On all wooden vessels in stormy weather the men were kept busy picking oakum against the day when it would be needed for caulking a yawning seam. That must have been about as entertaining and soul-satisfying as the baffling form of amusement provided for small children in colonial days. Their baby fingers were smeared with molasses and then they were given a handful of feathers to play with! On the older vessels another occupation as time-consuming, but a little more constructive was the making of "spun-yarn." Odds and ends of coarse fabric which the sailors called "junk" was ravelled, the threads wound into balls, then spun into light rope on a simple spindle. This work was done on deck in pleasant weather. One captain kept his crew scrubbing on quiet moonlight nights when in the tropics. Another captain kept his men busy sandpapering the wire rigging



when there was nothing else to polish. He feared mutiny and didn't dare allow the men a moment's idleness. Even Cap'n "Bill" Lermond made his crew work on Christmas!

Here is the story of an unforgettable Christmas as related by Eugene Henry:

Dec. 23, "a many years ago" the good ship *Santa Clara* sailed from New York bound to Yokohama, with a cargo of case oil shipped by the Standard Oil Company. The youngest member of her crew was a boy of 14, son and grandson of American clipper ship captains. The sea had been his cradle, as he was born aboard ship and was now responding to its call.

Dec. 25 found the "Santa Clara" close-hauled on the starboard tack, snugged down to upper and lower topsails, cross jack and mainsail furled. She was pounding along in a heavy head sea and a driving snowstorm.

The boy was standing proudly at the lee wheel in an enclosed wheel house, safe and warm, and thinking he was really doing something of importance, when, as a matter of fact, the kind-hearted second mate in whose watch he was, really sent him there to keep him out of danger.

"All hands on deck to shorten sail, sir," said the Captain to the second mate. The watch below came tumbling up, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes and growling at their ill luck.

"Furl the mizzen upper topsail, and reef the fore and main!" ordered the Captain.

Up aloft went everybody, except the Captain, first officer, cook and steward, man at the wheel and his important assistant on the lee side, who was congratulating himself that a second man was needed at the wheel.

His self satisfaction was suddenly interrupted by a harsh voice asking, "What in H— are you doing in that wheel house? Get up on that main upper topsail ward and give them a hand!"

"The second mate ordered me in here, sir."

"Never mind; up you go!" said the Captain.

I had been well fitted out by my people and was dressed in heavy flannel underclothes, thick trousers and a blue shirt thick as a board. Over these I had oilskins. "Off with those oilskins! You can never climb aloft lugging all that gear," ordered the Cap-

tain. Off they came, and up I started in the weather main rigging.

I was small and light for my age, and it was blowing so hard I was actually flattened out on the ratlines, but I kept at it and finally reached the upper topsail yard.

The second mate was hanging on to the tie with one hand and jumping his whole weight on the bunt of the sail, endeavoring to spill the wind out of it so they could haul out the weather ear-ring. When he saw me he yelled, "A great help you will be now; one hand for yourself, the other for the owner, but in your case hang on with both hands!" At long last, the topsail was reefed, the ship shortened down and we were told to go below and get our dinner.

I roomed with the boatswain in the after part of the forward house. He took his meals at the second table in the cabin. I had mine on top of my donkey (seachest). I grabbed my quart tin pot, my tin pans, and went to the lee galley door for my Christmas dinner. Boiled salt beef, boiled potato, good bread, and coffee sweetened with molasses, together with duff for dessert was handed to me by the "doctor." I had been hungry until I got back into my room. The door had been left on the hook, open a crack only. The old "Santa Clara" a notoriously wet brute, had shipped a heavy sea over the weather rail and everything in my room was afloat.

After I had succeeded in bailing and swabbing out my room, I plumped down on the donkey for my dinner. The coffee was cold, the beef was greasy and the bread soggy. I saw in my mind's eye my brother and sister sitting at table surrounded by turkey, "stuffing and fixings," mince, pumpkin, apple and custard pies, and all the other good things in keeping with a Down East Christmas dinner. My appetite was gone. For the only time in my life I was homesick. My bedclothes and mattress were wet and I was very unhappy.

A rap came at the door and there was the steward, "with the Captain's compliments," handing me a tray loaded with almost all the good things mentioned in preceding paragraph. "Thank the Captain for me," I replied, and away he went. The good food had no attraction for me then. I stowed it away in my food locker



with the greasy beef and cold potatoes and got what sleep I could during balance of my watch below.

Youth ever reasserts itself. At four bells in the middle watch that night I was washed off the main hatch into the lee scuppers by another slap of a wavetop over the weather rail. I went into my room to change into dry clothes and before I returned to the deck I ate all the good things sent me from the Captain's table; the boiled salt beef, cold potatoes, hard tack, and was wishing for more.

\* \* \*

The day of the old square-rigger has long passed. Steam has taken place of sail; oil is displacing coal. The electric "Mike" makes the old quartermaster jealous and the great number of scientific aids to navigation remove forever the aura of romance that hung like a golden haze over the Seven Seas in my boyhood days.

It still remains in my memory an unforgettable Christmas.

\* \* \*

It must have been thoughts of very bright eyes and very rosy cheeks that held a young man to a sailor's life. With such thoughts in mind he climbed and he scrubbed and he meekly took his discipline, all the while vowing to himself that sometime the day would come when, as master of his own wind-jammer, he need take "back-wind" from nobody and that then all the girls would throw themselves at his feet and he would have the pick of the lot. It was a common saying in seafaring ports if a girl were unusually attractive, "She is pretty enough to marry an East India captain."

"There are two sides to everything," a saying just as true of the small group on a sailing ship as of a large group in a factory or a mill. The sailor had his side, his duties and his submissions. The captain had his side, his prestige, his authority, his duty to himself, his crew, his vessel, his owners. Despite their individual diversities of interests, of rights and of duties there was a community of interests and of duties that bound them closely together. "One for all and all for one" was the only workable phi-

losophy of life aboard ship. Every man was his brother's keeper and so long as the vessel was on the high seas, the majority of seafaring people realized it and governed themselves accordingly.

The captain may have been, often was, a tyrant and a czar; the mate may have been, often was, a bully and a brute, depending on brass knuckles and belaying pins to keep his irresponsible, incompetent, or mutinous crew in subjection. Whether they were all saints or all devils somebody had to be in command, and out of that necessity grew the relations existing between the captain and his crew. Having known as many captains as I have, I doubt if many of them were ever brutal for brutality's sake, but if called upon to use force they felt the end justified the means. No vessel would have got very far following the Montesorri method of discipline.

May I quote an American and two eminent Englishmen? Samuel Eliot Morison says, "The sea is no wet nurse to democracy . . . instant and unquestioning obedience to the master is the rule of the sea." In his autobiography Darwin says "there is no such king as a sea-captain; he is greater even than a king or a school master!" and G. K. Chesterton commenting, adds, "In such peculiar perils the need of promptness constituted the need of autocracy."

It has been said that "a ship has her great moments and that those great moments are the great moments of her master." We know from the records and achievements of Thomaston vessels and Thomaston masters that they must have had many great moments together. Yet no matter how great the moments of the master and of the ship nothing could have been achieved unless the members of the crew had their great moments, too. Columbus's well known command, "Sail on! Sail on! and on!" was not addressed to his ship, but to his crew. Had they failed him in his hour of need his name would probably be buried as deep in oblivion as is theirs.

So it was on board many another vessel, entering into the spirit of his master every man must have again and again spent his last ounce of energy that his master and his master's ship might make the best possible time—outsail all rivals.

To the brave captains who fearlessly stood by through fair



weather and foul, triumphantly bringing their vessels into port or gallantly going down with them, we offer our salute. To the unknown sailors, too, we offer our tribute, for it was they who day in and day out were called upon to do deeds of daring which brought renown not to them but to their master and his vessel. Without them we would not have had the "great glory of our ships."

"And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing  
fellow rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick  
is over."

## *Mrs. Ranlett's Diary*

IN MARCH of the year 1864, the Ranlett household in Thomaston, Maine, was bustling with excitement. Capt. Ranlett's barque the *Sunbeam*, had just been launched and was tied up at the wharf waiting to be towed down the river to start her maiden voyage. The captain's family, consisting of his wife and two children, a boy and a girl, were to accompany him. For days the children had watched "Brown Bet," the family horse, take wagonload after wagonload of supplies to the ship. The bunks needed bedding, the cabins needed easy chairs, and the family needed clothing for summer heat and Antarctic cold. Books, games, and toys for the children to while away the many long hours on shipboard, must not be forgotten. The bark had to be provisioned, too, so there were many, many trips for the patient horse to make carrying not only what the children called "big food" in barrels and hogsheads, but many dainties, such as raisins, nuts, and figs for the captain's pantry.

Watching the cook sort out the supplies, the little boy ventured the suggestion that it looked as though they would be eating all the time. The good natured cook grinned and said, "Ah kind-o-recken there'll be times when you won't be eatin'."

Before sailing Capt. Ranlett had very definitely in mind where he was going and what cargoes he would carry. In January of that year he had set out in his sleigh for New Brunswick to purchase on his own account a cargo of doors, blinds, and sash for Australia. Having no consignment or order, he planned to auction his cargo there and proceed to the *Chincha* Islands to load guano for Europe. In Europe he would pick up what cargo he could for Boston.

When on the twenty-second of March, the vessel was finally loosed from her moorings, it was Capt. Jordan, Mrs. Ranlett's



father, who piloted the *Sunbeam* out around the beacon and down the river on the first leg of a voyage that was to take them around the world and halfway round again, and to last a year and six months.

Mrs. Ranlett, the Captain's wife, kept a diary throughout the voyage and to the daughter, Susan Alice Ranlett, the author is indebted for the following data:

Roster of the *Sunbeam*

Captain—Charles E. Ranlett

First Mate—(Capt.) Charles Stimpson

Second Mate—Ed Kenniston

Stewardess—Mary Leonard

Cook—Washington Peters

Sailors—Winfield Gillchrest, Newton Watts, Reuel Hallowell, Nelson Roney, William Winslow, James Speed, Charles Gloyd, Halsey Flint, Nelson McCallum, Lewis Oliver.

[Four of the sailors later became masters of their own vessels. The entire crew, with the exception of the colored cook, was from Thomaston, and he was from South Warren!]

March 22, 1864: Fine morning. Sailed down river (Georges) at eight o'clock. Had to beat. Wind ahead. Arrived at Caldwell's Island at noon. Sea rough. Seasick already!

March 23: Pleasant. Took leave of pilot (who wished them god-speed and a short voyage). Fresh N.E. winds. Had to put out to sea. Gale rising. Very cold.

Laid to all day—everything knocking about and turning over. Wish we were back home. Some snow.

Later, Alice was to write, "Bump went the bark on her side. And bump went brother out of his berth. The floor was as steep as a house roof. It was hard climbing to reach our berths again where we lay listening to alarming noises, feet in heavy boots running over their heads (the cabin was below deck) the sea pounding against the ship's sides and finally swashing into the cabin. We felt all trembly inside."

Every little while the captain would suddenly appear in the cabin reassuringly saying, "Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. She is behaving just like a lady."

The children were to learn that when the sea is noisy and rough a vessel always answers by the slatting of sails, the creaking of masts, and the groaning of the hull.

All the day, the vessel which was "light"—that is, without cargo—would pitch as if she were going to rise out of the water, then, like a woman, would change her mind and drop slam-bang into the trough of the sea again.

March 24: Wind still blowing. Ship in short sail. Everything that can move does.

March 25: Quite moderate. Mary (the stewardess) is up.

March 26: Quite moderate and pleasant. Children on deck. Mary at work. Up and dressed.

Pilot took command. (They were nearing the Canadian coast.)

March 27: Pleasant day. Made five miles during the night. Later took a favorable wind. Capt. Jordan came on board. (Capt. Jordan was a Thomaston man who had sailed from Thomaston at about the same time.)

While in St. John it was windy, cold, and winterish with snow on the decks. Mrs. Ranlett and the children went ashore in company with Mrs. Jordan. Going ashore was somewhat of an undertaking for Mrs. Jordan, as she was a large woman and had to sit in a chair and be hoisted ashore like a piece of freight.

March 29: Loading door frames, window frames, and lumber.

This matter of loading occupied the entire month of April as the next significant entry says: "Got clearance papers."

May 1st: Loaded at midnight last night. Ready for sea. (Out of the Bay of Fundy by two o'clock in the afternoon, running into frequent hard showers.)

Saw many porpoises. Children began to study. Met a brig bound in opposite direction.



Sighting or meeting another vessel was a disquieting problem for two-thirds of the voyage. As the Civil War was raging, every craft was an object of suspicion until it proved itself otherwise. The American consul at St. John tried to prevail upon Capt. Ranlett to sail under the "Union Jack." The captain knew as well as the consul the almost positive certainty of running afoul of the *Alabama* or the *Tallahassee*.

Most of his fortune was tied up in the *Sunbeam* and its cargo and his family, all that he held near and dear, were aboard; yet he stoutly refused to disclaim the "Stars and Stripes," saying, "I will go down with my ship first!"

Word has come down through the years from the stewardess, that during all the voyage when everything was drawing well, Capt. Ranlett would lustily sing "America."

One of the first interesting experiences for the children was finding themselves in the midst of the Sargasso Sea, a large area in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean free of currents and more or less covered with floating seaweed. The frightened cook whispered to the children, "Mighty bad place. I've heerd many's the fine ship has stuck fast here and rotted away." Their father diverted their attention by drawing up buckets of water to prove that they were still sailing on water and to show them the many interesting forms of life to be found there.

As they were headed southeast for Australia and were skimming along at the rate of one hundred eighty-seven knots, the weather began to get warm by the middle of May.

May 27: Fine day, but warm. Met three ships bound north. Spoke American ship *Jane Guthrie* 95 days from Callao to Boston. Reported water spout.

May 31: 82° W. Blowing fresh. Crossed the "line" last night. Men taking out sea stores. Last night restless. Very warm. Tried sleeping on deck in morning until rain came. Hot.

June 10: Sighted a Spanish or Dutch ship 26° S. Growing cooler. Trade winds. Very fine nearly all day.

Then followed about two weeks of disagreeable sea-going—no sun, damp, wind blowing hard.

June 28: Sighted Island of Tristan d'Acuna. Very lonely. Chronometer three miles wrong. Discouraging weather, made little headway.

Tristan d'Acuna is an island in the South Atlantic whose nearest neighbors are the Island of St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope, each about one thousand miles distant.

Miss Alice Ranlett said that Tristan d'Acuna, looming up in the vast expanse of waters, its mountain peaks crowned with snow, haunted her as one of the loneliest places on the face of the earth. Around the steep rocky base of the island, the sea beats in a never-ending ring of surf. Since the island possesses no harbor into which a vessel may enter, approach to the shore when possible, must be made in lighters. In the olden days whaling and clipper ships knew Tristan as a land mark. Occasionally, when in dire need of water, a ship would anchor about two miles off shore and its boats would run the gauntlet of the surf to get a supply—one thing of which the island possesses an abundance.

As second mate of the *Cavalier*, Capt. Ranlett had gone ashore for that very purpose several years before. He found the few inhabitants a simple, honest, God-fearing group of people. They were able to supply most of their own wants, but welcomed anything extra that might come their way. Even a disastrous shipwreck did not fill them with dismay, for much coveted supplies including marriageable young men were sometimes washed ashore.

It is said that for years after a shipwreck in which many of the native men lost their lives, the burden of every Tristan d'Acuna maiden's prayer was, "God bless father, God bless mother, and send a good shipwreck so that I can get married."

With the passing of sailing vessels, the island is now lonelier than ever, as it is off the beaten track of the steamship lines. A supply ship from Great Britain makes a periodical trip every two or three years. It brings such liberal supplies that sometimes the inhabitants cannot make use of all the epsom salts and Bibles the government, as solicitous for their bowels as their souls, thinks the inhabitants may need.

The islanders did not hear of the World War I Armistice



until 1922. Let us hope they are still happily ignorant of how poorly the peace pact was kept.

July 18: Four months out! Have sailed 1479 miles.

July 22: Blowing a gale. All reefed down. Squally. Bad nights. Little sleep. Hard time. Off course.

Aug. 15: Passed Kangaroo Island. First time for thirty-five days have seen any land. Chilly today. (Kangaroo Island off south coast of Australia.)

They could not only see the land, but could smell it, since the spicy odor of the wattle-tree flowers was wafted far out to sea.

Aug. 16: Beating again. Took on pilot. The first thing he said was, "The Alabama is sunk and we are rejoiced!"

They all drew a sigh of relief. The colored cook, especially, was happy. The good natured crew had banteringly told him of the dreadful things the "Rebs" would do to him if they caught him.

The following day they anchored by a lightship; a tow boat came alongside and a few hours later the vessel was tied up at the dock in Port Adelaide. The captain and his family went ashore; the captain to attend to the ship's business, to order fresh meats and vegetables, and the family to see the sights and get a "land dinner."

The family's stay in Adelaide was an enjoyable one. There was so much to see that was different! One of the first things they encountered was an emu, not in a crossword puzzle, but on the very dock where they had to land each time they went ashore. The creature was supposed to be tame, but was treacherous, so they had to watch out for it. Besides the *emu*, they saw for the first time kangaroos, *wallabies*, *cassowaries* and the many other strange animals peculiar to Australia.

It was spring in Australia (September) and beyond the town the wilderness was blazing with the fragrant yellow blossoms of the *wattle* trees, which the voyagers had smelled so far out at sea.

All in all it was a very pleasant stay. The captain sold his cargo most advantageously and the crew and family were refreshed by being on land after the many tedious months at sea. When it came time to weigh anchor once more, it seemed almost like leaving home.

Sept. 11: Getting ready for sea. Packing dishes away.

The captain could get no cargo for the Chincha Islands, so the ship had to go in ballast. Being delayed by a fearful gale, the vessel did not get away until the night of the 16th.

Sept. 17: Lovely day. Proceeding comfortably. First Sabbath at sea. Wind light.

Oct. 4: Sunday. Reached the International Date Line, where all East bound vessels add a day to their week. On reaching the line, the captain said, "Today, we pass from East Longitude to West Longitude and we gain a day. That is, we have the same day twice, so to-morrow also will be Sunday." The stewardess nearly dropped the dish she was holding. The cook was openly defiant. When ordered to give the crew plum duff two days in succession, he grumbled about the sinfulness of serving a Sunday dinner on Monday, saying, "Give them plum duff again to-day! Never in all my going to sea did I cook plum duff on Monday! What's got the 'old man'? Two duff days together is contr'y to reason!"

Because of the extra dessert and Sunday leisure, the crew probably agreed with Alice that "it was the best day of the week to be twice."

On one stretch of this run to the Chincha Islands the vessel ran into blustery squally weather: "Had to spread *wallabie* skins on beds. Stove very comfortable."

Oct. 19: Rain—always glad to get water.

Oct. 28: Reuel Hallowell fell into lower hold—feared killed. Did not even break a bone—almost a miracle.

Oct. 30: Sighted a sail—first in 44 days. Sailor who fell in hold very well.

Nov. 6: Arrived Callao, Peru—nearly calm. Sunday.



(The cook, who had grumbled and grouched all the way from the 180th meridian, and was even then reluctantly boiling plum duff, was the first to ask the port captain the day of the week. "Sunday," came back the answer. In bewilderment the cook turned round saying, "Surely the Old Man's a wonder, but *where* did that extra day come from?"

From Callao, the *Sunbeam* went to the *Chincha* Islands, just off the coast of Peru, to load guano. The group of islands known as "the Chinchas" is made up of three, North, South, and Middle. The *Sunbeam* anchored within the group and made preparations for a three months' stay. Awnings and swings were put up for the children, who except for the dusty, smelly cargo, found their stay there very pleasant. There was always something to see and to do. The waters teemed with fish. Schools of mackerel and *bonito* dashed between the anchored ships while flying fish flashed above the waves. There were seals and sea-lions on the outlying rocks and the air was full of birds. The islands, dun colored except for the grounds about the governor's palace, were absolutely barren and unutterably dreary. All water had to be brought from the main. Occasionally the children went with their father or some member of the crew to the supply ship to fill the ship's casks. Sometimes the captains chartered a sailboat for a trip to the main to secure fresh meat, and if a boy or girl would promise to sit very still, he or she might be taken along.

In 1864 when the *Sunbeam* was loading guano, the deposit was still eighty feet deep in places and was estimated to consist of twenty thousand ship loads of two thousand tons each. The market price for it in Europe was greater than for flour.

Scores of other vessels were also swinging at anchor while the dusty cargo was being chuted into their holds. Some of the vessels were British, some French, some Spanish, many American vessels, several hailing from Thomaston, the *Sunbeam's* home port.

Capt. George Gilchrist, father of Mrs. William R. Grace, being captain of the "store ship," was stationed there. Capt. Morse of the *Mary Campbell*, Capt. Stetson of the "Criterion" (they had neighbored with him at St. Johns); Capt. Gilchrist of the *Edward O'Brien* and "Billy" Tobey, on his first voyage that was to lead

him to the quarter-deck of his own vessel, were among the Thomaston folk there.

Since the Thomaston vessels were commanded by Thomaston captains whose wives and families were aboard, and the vessels were anchored so close together, it was often possible to chat from deck to deck; consequently there was much neighboring back and forth. Precious china, which had been packed in barrels, was brought out and every captain vied with the other captains in entertaining. Breakfast was the rather unusual party meal, possibly because that was the cleanest end of the day.

Religious services were held aboard ship on Sundays. Frequent trips were made to Callao to visit Mr. and Mrs. William R. Grace. Mrs. Grace was a native of St. George, Maine, and a gracious hostess to her many friends and acquaintances from Thomaston. Letters from home were exchanged.

Mrs. Ranlett, while at the Chinchas, received a letter written by her father, Oliver Jordan, of Thomaston. It was dated November 6, 1864. He had just read in paper (probably the Boston Journal) of their safe arrival in Adelaide. It was a fine Sabbath day. Margaret and Frankie had gone to the Baptist church to attend funeral service for Flavill Carr, who was wounded at Richmond—had had arm amputated.

“Richmond has not yet fallen. Must be patient; many hard battles have been fought. Still pressing the enemy in its stronghold. It is thought there may be a change in war methods after presidential election. Little doubt of Lincoln’s re-election. The Democrats are very confident and are sparing no effort to carry the polls. The results will probably reach you by same mail as this letter . . .

“Mr. Chase resigned the U. S. Treasury in July”. . .

“Nov. 10. We now know results. Lincoln and Johnson carried all but three or four of the States. The election passed off without rioting or trouble in large cities. There is a rumor of the capture of the *Florida* last week. Only two privateers now known to be out. They destroyed seven or eight vessels off New York a few days ago. Think they will not be in your track home. Wilmington is a great place now for blockade runners and home of piratical cruisers. There is a large fleet collecting there now for purpose of attacking the place”. . .



In the letter a young captain, married to a beautiful girl the preceding April, came in for a bit of condemnation. Hoping to steady the youth, his father had "bought in" for him the commanding part of a schooner. While en route to Cape Breton Island to load coal, the schooner ran aground. The captain managed to save his own life, but not that of his young bride. He was bitterly censored by the town's people for his seeming indifference to the loss, not only of his vessel, but of his wife.

Watt's new ship is at *St. John's* loading deal. Jim Watts is in her. He was taken prisoner by the *Tallahassee* last summer and the barque burned. The owners are all heavy losers, Watts, it is said, having little of anything left. Some owners have little sympathy for him. Some even glad of it.

Coal business fine affair. The high price makes it very remunerative. Ten or twelve thousand tons with a clear profit of over a dollar on a ton. Coal is \$14.00 this fall. Hope to hear of your safe arrival in Callao and that we will meet within the year. Everything has risen very much since you left home.

Then followed the following quotations:

Flour, \$14 a bbl.; meal, \$1.90 a bu.; lard, 30¢ a lb.; butter, 45¢; tea, \$1.50; rice, 18¢; sugar, 30¢; molasses, \$1.25 gal.; pork, 25¢; coffee, 50¢; cotton cloth 70¢; calico, 50¢; *De Lain* 60¢. Gold quoted up to 8th of November, \$2.58.

While the ship's families were whiling away the hours as pleasantly as could be expected under such foul conditions, the work of loading the ships went on steadily and laboriously. This was all done by Chinese coolies who shovelled the guano, carried it to the top of the high cliff, and sent it hurtling down canvas chutes into lighters, which in turn carried it to the ships. It was a horribly hot, dusty, and foul smelling job from start to finish.

The poor, homesick coolies, driven and lashed by cruel overseers, were virtual slaves. They were brought to the island under a five-year contract, but were never allowed to return for fear that reports of their deplorable condition might raise a protest. Their only hope of escape from the hell-hole was death. Many

tried to hasten that end by plunging into the boiling surf, trusting that though their bodies might perish, the waves of the mighty Pacific would mercifully waft their souls back to their beloved Celestial Kingdom.

Jan. 31, 1865: Month has passed. Still at Chinchá. At *home* all day. Still taking guano in starboard side. Rejoiced when last load was in. Washed Tiny (the dog). A fitting climax!

When the vessel was finally loaded and it was time to up anchor, sailors came from the other ships to help man the windlass. Although it was no easy task to heave anchors which had become deeply embedded in mud during the long stay at the islands, many hands made light work and to the rhythm of such chanties as "Rio Grande" and "Ranzo, boys, Ranzo" they soon had the anchor hoisted and lashed to its ringbolts.

This bee or frolic over, the sailors were treated to a Sunday dinner, plum-duff and all. On the quarter deck tables were spread with all sorts of delicacies for the captains of the other vessels and their wives who came aboard to say adieu. Cheery promises were made to see one another in some distant port or back home in Thomaston. Then, when the last visitor had gone ashore, the barque with all canvas proudly set, sailed away for a "tedious chance" around the Horn. She had a rendezvous to keep!

First she sailed to Callao, Peru, for discharge papers; thence to Queenstown, Ireland. While anchored in Callao Roads, everything was put in sea order. The captain and his family went ashore to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Grace. Mrs. Grace and Capt. Ranlett had been childhood friends in St. George. From Callao they went to Lima to visit the cathedral.

At the time of departure from Callao, calm and hot. Soon after leaving were in company of a barque and ship one day, not alone on a wide, wide sea.

Children began to study!

Dull and very warm. Winds very light.

Lovely day. Eleven months since we took up abode on *Sunbeam*—tired of it.

Feb. 19. Very fine day. In company of barque which we outsailed.



Later entries:—

Mild and cloudy. Ship Wanderer in company. Morning quite rough.

Feb. 23: Fine breeze all day. Barque quite near.

Then:—

Very nearly calm.

“Still in company of the barque” was the entry for eighteen days.

As one writer has expressed it, “Here wind and sea sulked; breezes often died to a breath, and the sea was a glassy surface glaring with heat. Everybody felt listless and lazy. Even the barque was lazy; the daily lines on the chart discouraging, short and zigzagging instead of pointing straight ahead.”

After that long calm, the ‘god of gales’ decided to inject a little novelty and the entry reads:

Long. 95° W. Men putting on topsails. For two hours smart rain. Water came over on quarter deck.”

March 2: Very bad. Uncomfortable night. Raining and blowing hard. Commenced to reef at midnight. Rough and uncomfortable. Children in bed. Boys working in cabin on sails. Lat. 43° S. (They were in the “roaring forties.”)

Sails and rigging had to be kept in prime condition. No strained seams or slack rope could be tolerated. As soon as there was the least sign of stress or strain the matter received immediate attention.

Here “a stitch in time” might not only “save nine,” but on it might depend the fate of the vessel itself and of all hands on board.

The *Sunbeam* was one of the first Thomaston vessels to have wire rigging, so she did not have much rope to fray.

March 3: Calm. Knitting and sewing.

March 4: Ship pitching some, but comfortable day. Tiresome

head winds. Strong South winds—weather rough. All well. Went on quarter deck. Not cold yet. Heavy sea.

March 5: Scudding with short sails—rough and tiresome. Could not go on deck today. No observation.

March 6: Stormy.

March 8: Sunshine—very pleasant and comfortable.

March 9: Headwind S.E. Sat with door open.

March 10: Almost calm. Time tedious with gales and headwinds so much of the time.

Opposing winds compelled the *Sunbeam* to sail southwest almost at right angle to her proper course.

March 13: Lovely day. Fair wind. 9 knots an hour. Smooth and comfortable.

March 14: Strong breeze all night. Passed iron ship bound North.

March 15: No observation. (Dense fog here sometimes blots out everything.) Last night wind turned to South and made us uncomfortable.

March 16: No observation. Rolling badly. Who would like to go to sea? Fine breeze all day. An iceberg in sight. No observation for five days.

March 17: Fine breeze. Scudding-sails set. Passed much dreaded Cape Horn at noon today and I am a thankful woman!

In sailor parlance “rounding the Horn” loosely means from 50° Lat. and back again to 50°. It is a long, tedious run at best and when easily made, something for which to give a sigh of relief.

Like all ships that round the Horn the *Sunbeam* was accompanied by many kinds of sea birds. Sometimes there were so many feathers on the water that they looked like foam. The bird that kept closest company was the albatross. Perhaps, like the aborigines they mistook the ship's sails for wings of a larger creature. They hovered around the barque, sometimes off the windward side, frequently remaining motionless for hours between the masts. The sailors caught them by putting chunks of salt pork on fish hooks.

When brought on deck, they floundered around helplessly, being unable to take off without a boost, even if given a chance



to fly. Because of their lack of sea-legs, they presented a most ludicrous appearance—becoming terribly sea-sick and vomiting just like any landlubber on his first voyage.

The waters swarmed with fish, large fish swimming alone, and schools of smaller fish that to the children seemed to be racing with the vessel.

March 19: Fine night. Slept until seven. Smooth and clear as a bell—so beautiful. Lat. 55 S.

The *Sunbeam* was approximately two weeks in rounding the Horn. The record time was about one week.

March 21-22-23: Fine and clear. Strong breezes and rough seas. Topsails taken in once or twice. Hard getting about, but we get along.

March 24: Strong breeze all night. Little sleep—jumped about so much. Travelling fast. Week from Horn in Lat. 46°-53°. Distance 140 miles today. Married nineteen years. Time seems short.

March 26: Sunday—lovely day. 170 miles. Sat on deck. First chance since leaving the Cape. Cloudy—nice breeze. Sent up royals—49 days from Callao. Hope in eight weeks more to see land. Average 150 miles a day from Cape. Charles (the captain) thinks we may get to Equator in fifteen days.

Then, a few days later:

Saw a ship today. We hope no privateers. Smart showers. Able to do washing. Two ships in company. One lost bowsprit. 'The Atlantic Ocean seems more like home than the Pacific—it's not so lonesome. There's a sail in sight nearly every day' was the young son's remark.

April 4: Fine and warm. Saw no sail. Boys told "Wash" (the colored cook) if the "Rebs" caught him they would do something awful to him.

In Lat. 23°:

Very warm. Wind not fair. On deck all day. 80°; very, very warm. Overcast and calm, calm, calmer! Writer, hot, hotter, hottest! A

thunder shower in the evening, but no wind. Caught a nice lot of fresh water—able to wash. Anxious for breeze.

They were in the equatorial doldrums of dead calm and smothering heat.

To those aboard a sailing ship, a calm is most exasperating, because there is absolutely nothing one can do about it. A strong wind and even a gale, is a challenge, a challenge to be up and doing. A calm is more like an endurance test in obstinacy. The wind won't blow, the ocean won't stir, the ship can't budge. She is brought to a standstill as effectively as if she were caught in a net. The crew becomes restless and discontented, almost demoralized, for the simple reason that for life on ship board to be endurable there must be action. A child aboard another Thomaston ship caught in the doldrums once threw a tin can overboard and watched it float for fourteen days!

April 9: Light breeze. Weather warm. Long to be in cooler weather. Afraid we may not make the line by the 15th. No use to make a calamity of it.

Lat. 16° S. It became dark and cloudy with heavy rains that filled the tanks. Sighted two ships bound South.

Lat. 10° S. Sighted barque *Mary Russell Mitford* from England. She told us Northern States were gaining.

Because of moderate breezes the barque's progress was slight. One night, however, water came into the windows.

Sighted seven vessels in three days—all going Southeast.

Lat. 8°-17 S. Slept on deck. Studding sails set. Warm and moderate.

Lat. 4° S. Sighted eight vessels bound South.

April 19: Light air ahead. Miserable time with showers. Ten weeks out. Within forty-six miles of equator. *Dead* calm. No one at wheel. Hot! No comfort anywhere. Barque in company with us.

April 21: Calm night and day. Go a little in squalls. Lost six miles since yesterday! Other barque goes ahead once in a while, then we go ahead.

April 22: Light air. We actually go ahead! Saw for three hours most remarkable devil fish—monstrous, fifteen feet from fin to fin.



Pilot fish fastened to and about him. The poor, colored cook was terrified, believing it to be a bad omen.

April 23: Little breeze. In *North* latitude! Very thankful to be in another stage of our journey! Saw rocky islands.

April 24: Now North. (They ran with light in binnacle only, for fear of privateers.) Wonder what news will be. Growing cooler. Passed the *Havelock* of Boston, which had sailed from Callao some weeks before the *Sunbeam*.

May 1: Mid ocean. No violets or trailing arbutus; but wide, wide waters! Barque and ship in sight. Spoke the ship which was 90 days from Melbourne—had touched at St. Helena and got news from the United States; said "Charleston taken Feb. 18 by the Union Army."

May 3: Fine day. Light wind. Read "Life of Charles the First."

May 5: Strong breeze for 24 hours. Four vessels in sight. A signal from English barque.

May 6: Wind light, nearly head on. Two barques in sight. One we outsailed. (Still in fear of privateers) Sailed through great fields of sargasso.

May 8: Saw a large ship—the next day, five.

May 10: New ship in company. Light head wind.

May 11: Discouraged. Progress slow.

May 12: To my great joy, nearly fair wind—going seven or eight knots.

May 15: Wind died out in the night. Painting going on in cabin and on boats.

May 16: Slight squalls.

May 17: Filling trunks and making ready for shore. Lat. 35° N. Nearly calm. I'm weary of hearing the sails slat.

Like the sails and the rigging every one on board ship has his nerves frayed by the constant struggle with the elements. Little wonder that after more than a year of pitching and rolling, of alternating torrid heat and frigid cold, of strong winds and provoking calms, that baffling head winds at this point caused the captain's good wife to complain of so little a thing as the slatting of the sails.

James Russell Lowell wrote, "I know nothing so tedious and exasperating as that regular slap of the wilted sails when the ship rises and falls with the slow breathing of the sleeping sea, one greasy, brassy swell following another slow and smooth."

May 18: Fine morning and good breeze. Passed ship out 181 days from Colombo, Ceylon.

May 19: Strong breeze for twenty-four hours. Drinking water discolored. Ship in sight. Raining. Distance 180 miles. First time on short sail for two months!

May 22: Wind fresh from South. Only five sails set—heavy sea. Boards are up. (To keep water out of cabin) Ring around the sun. (Sailor's sign of a storm) Lat.  $43^{\circ}$  N.—Long.  $27^{\circ}$  W.

May 23: Strong gale and squalls. Rolled. Reefed topsails at midnight. Heavy sea. Boards are up. On deck two hours in forenoon. Lat.  $45^{\circ}$  N.

May 24: Fine, moderate day. West wind. Studding sails out. After so much rolling, comfortable again.

May 26: Dark and rainy. Easterly wind. Food getting low. Everything *good* is gone.

May 27: Calm until 10 A.M. Nice, fair breeze sprang up for us. Not far from Cork.

May 29: Head wind off to North. Spoke barque *Sparkling Wave*. The captain shouted, "The War is ended! Lee surrendered! Lincoln killed! Jackson (he meant Johnson) president."

May 30: Took a pilot. Ran into Cork. Went ashore. Received letters from home. Find that Lincoln was shot.

May 31: Went to town with the children. Aboard the train Capt. Ranlett had nothing but Australian gold, which the conductor refused to accept. An aristocratic-appearing Englishman, seeing the captain's plight, offered to pay the family's passage. (As long as he lived, the captain remembered this incident as one of the greatest courtesies that had ever been shown him.) Spent the day in the country—green—scenery up river very fine.

June 1: Dark and rainy. Could not go ashore again. In bed all day.

June 2: Beat out of Queenstown. Proceeded to Galway to discharge. Tiresome to be at sea again.

June 3: Fine. Sailing close by bays and headlands of Irish coast. Took a pilot. Anchored at one o'clock. Capt. Miller called. Nothing attractive here (Galway).

From Galway, Mrs. Ranlett and the children went to London to visit a sister whose husband was in business there.

June 8: In London. Shopping. Rode on the Bowling Green Road. Went into Westminster Abbey to celebrate Alice's birthday. Brother



called the Abbey "a kind of inside grave-yard." Alice got lost and locked inside for a time, but was not afraid because she was in "God's house."

June 10: Shopping. Chilly

June 14: Went to botanic garden.

June 18: Visited grave of giant 9 ft. 3 in. in height. Went to the theater. Had dressmaking done. Donkey rides for children. Visited the Wax Works.

June 29: Went to Chester, Holly Head and Dublin. Fine run across the channel to Munster. Put up at Princess Hotel.

June 30: Dublin. Visited International Institute for few hours. Went to Galway by railway. Took tea at Mrs. Burbridge's. Went aboard barque in evening.

July 1: Came out of Galway. Pilot left at two. Wind light. Go, but little. Going South. Raining. All feel quite miserable.

July 2: Rough.

July 4: Dull. Fresh south wind. Vessel jumping. All miserable. Mate quite ill—improving.

For several days following, it was fair.

July 13: Becalmed. Very warm.

July 14: Becalmed again! Hard chance!

July 15: Arrived in Cadiz, Spain. (To load salt) Officers came aboard. Taught Alice some Spanish. Took out ballast—took in salt. Finished caulking the ship. Went ashore. Visited hotel. Walked around the city. Went shopping.

July 25: Hot. Strong wind. Visited cathedral. Attended high mass—all fol-de-rol.

Mary Leonard, the stewardess, was a Catholic and as long as she lived she told her son of the beautiful cathedral in Cadiz and the impressive services that she attended there. No "fol-de-rol" to her.

The work of loading was held up by many "days of obligation" when the stevedores could not work because of obligation to attend divine services. On such days yellow flags were flown from the cathedral. Every morning, Capt. Ranlett rushed up on deck to look for the flags. If they were flying he would call down into the cabin, in disgust, "*Another holiday, Maria!*"

July 26: Blowing fresh. Spent night ashore. Glad to be back on board.

July 27-28-29: Still blowing a perfect gale. Cannot get anchors out. Do not wish any more "levanters." They had been almost as trying as the Spanish "manana" (tomorrow.)

July 30: Moderated. Got under weigh and proceeded once more homeward. (Boston) Weather fine.

August 1: Sea rough. All quite miserable.

August 3: Very fine weather. Nice breeze. Four days out. 530 miles. 200 miles in twenty-four hours.

August 5: Delightful weather. Wind rather light.

August 8: Fine. Moderate head winds—make but little progress.

August 9: Wind fresh ahead. Jumping and pitching.

August 10-11-12: Light head winds. Azores in sight. Very warm.

August 13: Calm all day.

August 15: Pitching and tumbling.

August 16: Close hauled. Pitching badly. No fair winds yet. All hands painting, putting the vessel in order.

No matter how long the voyage or how severe a drubbing a vessel got, an American master always prided himself on keeping his craft painted till it gleamed, and polished till it shone, and everything aboard in "ship shape."

Wind still ahead for two days more.

August 20: Sunday. No fair wind yet.

August 21: Twenty-one days out. Cloudy. Light showers.

August 23: Fine—high head wind. Struck fog and rain. Wind heading off.

August 24: Fresh wind. Uncomfortable on ship.

August 25: On 'the Banks' today. Squalls all day. Saw one fishing smack this morning.

August 26: Remarkably fine. No wind. Saw one barque.

August 29: Clear and fine. Rough. Tumble and pitch. Barque and many other vessels in sight coming and going into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Stormy night—head winds. Spoke French fisherman and purchased some fish.

August 30: Fine. Sable Island in sight—twenty miles off.

August 31: Our summer fled—still at sea. Fine and beautiful.

Sept. 1-2: Cloudy, dark, rough, pitching. Head winds.

Sept. 4: Lovely day. Light east wind. Passed a schooner. In-



formed that Atlantic Telegraph was a failure. During night in danger of coming in contact with barque, but few feet away. Disagreeable experience.

Sept. 6: Foggy and disagreeable.

Sept. 7: Fine. Made Cape Cod at dawn today.

Sept. 8: Anchored at daylight in Narrows near Fort Warren; went up to Constitution Wharf. Went to Parker House. All hands discharged with wages.

Sept. 9: All hands left ship except Martin, the Irish boy. Packed up and put things away.

Sept. 10: Went on board ship. Visited friends in Boston.

Days following did shopping. Had pictures taken.

Sept. 13: In Thomaston. Went down by boat. (No train to Thomaston at that time). Good to have native air again!

After many other successful voyages, the *Sunbeam* ended her days in the quicksands of the *Irriwaddy* River near Rangoon, Burma. While loading rice, she mysteriously sank at anchor. The swelling rice quickly destroyed her.

## *From the Fo'c's'le of the "Sunbeam"*

HAVING HEARD from the captain's quarters of the *Sunbeam's* personnel and the preparations for the long voyage, it is interesting to read the following letters from the fo'c's'le of the barque. In fifteen short years, the author of the letters, who was embarking upon a sailor's career with so much apprehension and so many misgivings, was master of his own vessel—and giving orders to other boys as timid and as doubtful as he had been.

St. John, N. B., April 3. 1864

My dear Mother:—

I seat myself to let you know that I am well and hope that these lines will find you the same. I received your letter the second, and was very glad to hear from you. We had a very bad time coming down. You thought about right—I would have given all my old boots and shoes if I had been at home *setting* by the fire that night. It blew so hard that I was so sick I could not turn out. We drifted about 120 miles that night. We laid to 36 hours with not a man at the wheel.

I am in the second mate's watch, and he is a first-rate fellow. We have fine old times here now. We are hauled up on the blocks, a coppering. We are all hands going to take up coppering when we get back.

We are all hands going to raise moustaches. I have been up to the suspension bridge today—it is quite a curiosity. Nelson was sick, as well as I. I did not pay the postage on this letter because I have got no money yet; our greenbacks go for 40 cents off down here, and silver we have to discount 20 cents on the dollar. This is the meanest hole that you ever saw. Your cake did not last long for we ate it before we got in here—the pickles did me the best good. You tell the boys I said I should like to be home having a game of cards. I don't like going to sea so well as I thought I should. I don't like the fun of turning out these cold nights; there



is no fun in it. I don't think I shall ever go to sea if ever I get home again. We have fine times in the forecastle, singing and dancing. Nelson and I are left all alone tonight—the rest of the crew have gone to meeting and so we have got a fine chance to write.

From your absent son,

James R. Speed

Direct your letters to Bark Sunbeam, St. John, N. B., care of Capt. Ranlett.

St. John, N. B., April 24, 1864

Dear Mother:—

It is very cold and is raining today. We worked until 7 o'clock last night putting in deal and I am pretty tired I can tell you. I received your letter and was very glad to hear from home. Winslow is coming home this week. I wish I was. We have firstrate times. Capt. Jordan's ship sailed the 21st. We shall sail in about 10 days. We have got our lower hold full of deals, pickets and laths. It will take about one week more of pleasant weather. It storms about every other minute.

They are all well in the forecandle except Lewis Oliver; he has had a breeding sore on his finger. He has been laid up a fortnight with it, but it is better now, and he has gone to work again. The more I see of Mr. Kenniston the better I like him. He has got a nickname for me; calls me 'Fryda.' When he chose me in his crew he said I was the smartest one in the crowd. I have to do all the work aloft, and all the hard work and the smallest pay. I like our watch firstrate—Win Gillchrest, Lewis Oliver, Nute Watts, Ru Hallowell and myself. I have learned to box the compass and am going to learn to steer when we get outside. The mate says that when I get back I will be capable of going second mate. I guess that I can get \$15 a month. If I try hard I think I ought to. Tell father I say I had rather of been driving Tom Dunn's old horse at 75 cents a day than to have been out in that storm we had coming down here.

James R. Speed

St. John, April 28, 1864

Dear Mother:—

I was very much disappointed I didn't receive a letter yesterday. When the rest of the crew got theirs it made me feel homesick. I am on watch tonight and am writing in the galley while the cook has

gone ashore. The stevedores are finishing loading tonight. I was very sorry that I could not get much money here; he would not give a man any money. He made out to pay my washwomen and for my boots. I had to pay \$1.43 for my boots. Everyone is busy tonight. There is an awful noise on deck. Tell father I wish I was out with him as I hate to leave. It is quite a long time to be out of sight of land—four months. I have not had a good time since I have been here; have only been on shore two or three times. Be sure and write a good long letter to Australia.

James R. Speed



## *Word Came to Thomaston*

UNTIL COMPARATIVELY recent times the arrival of news in Thomaston savored of the dramatic. When the settlement was first made on the Georges the only means of communication was by sailing vessels. Every sail that made its appearance on the river was hailed for three reasons: first, it usually meant the safe return of one or more of the town folk from some distant port; second, it was bringing a long awaited cargo in its hold; and, third, it was a most welcome bearer of news from the outside world. If surprise is the chief element of news, the little colony could have subsisted indefinitely on the local brand that the Indians were creating—surprise raids and surprise “*massacrees*” were the order of the day.

One day in 1755 *word came* from the nearby plantation at *Meduncook* that a party of savages had swooped down on the little settlement killing Joshua Bradford and wife and severely injuring their daughter, a girl about twelve. At the approach of the Indians the girl snatched the baby and crept into a barrel where she remained until she believed the onslaught over. Then, clasping the babe in her arms, she ran for her life over the causeway leading to the stockade on Garrison Island, within which the other settlers had taken refuge. The moment she appeared in the open, tomahawks began to fly. One struck her, imbedding itself so deeply in her side that it remained there until removed by gentle hands within the fort. The babe escaped uninjured. Bradford had scorned to seek refuge in the fort because not long before he had saved the life of the chief and felt sure he would not be molested.

Items of news were all retailed by word of mouth, brought by breathless couriers. Everybody was informed of everything of that sort almost as soon as it happened. What the colonists

wanted to know most of all was how the rest of the world was faring and whether it still remembered the lonely outpost in the wilderness.

That mail was coming and going by the water route with some degree of regularity in the Seventeen-forties is shown by a letter written by the truck-master at the fort on the Georges to his son, a minister at Falmouth (Portland), in which he said, "I suppose there is not paper or ink at Falmouth or you would have wrote me." Not a word did he say about the uncertainty of delivery.

When the settlements along the coast increased in number, in addition to the water-borne messengers there came the man with the knotted yellow handkerchief in his hand who had travelled on foot all the way from Sheepscot (Damariscotta). He must have longed for winged sandals as footsore and weary he stalked through the unbroken forest where he occasionally caught a glimpse of a bear, heard the distant howling of wolves, or came face to face with a hostile red man. His recompense came when he unknotted his bandana in Wheaton's mill. At that moment he was easily the most important figure in the little group gathered there; for, whether the news was good or bad, the unfolding of it was in his hands. Unlike the modern postman he not only delivered the mail, but usually had the satisfaction of knowing the messages the letters contained before he delivered them.

As time went on a bridle path was blazed along the coast and then the bandana gave way to saddlebags. Nothing was lost by the change. Indeed, the courier's importance was enhanced. The distant sound of his horn, like "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," foretold his coming. Doors flew open. Children rushed into the highways and byways to be ready to welcome him. While of necessity he was often obliged to give his horse the rein in the depths of the forest, when he entered the clearings he could spur the animal on in order that he might gallop through the settlement and dramatically draw rein at the point of delivery. The arrival of the most perishable commodity in the world, the news, justified the flourish and the commotion.

Stage coaches, in turn, supplanted the lone horseback rider. They, with their passengers and their bulging mail bags, were



for many years the last word in the transportation and dissemination of news. Journeys were long and tedious. Passengers, unless they were tongue-tied or confirmed snobs, could not bridle the human desire for companionship and conversation. News of the state, of the nation and the whole wide world was eagerly exchanged by persons to whom the term "fellow-travelers" meant only that which the name implies. In addition to the give and take en route, there were the stops at wayside inns for refreshment and the gleaning of additional items of information. Take it all in all as a conveyor of news the lumbering, swaying stage-coach, was one of the most highly socialized means of communication ever devised.

The mail had to go through. Winter's snows, summer's heat, fall rains, spring freshets and deep mud might hold it up for a time, but not for long. The stage drivers in the accomplishment of their task acquired a skill in horsemanship which became a source of great personal and local rivalry. The satisfaction of earning and the pride of holding the title of "an old whip" gave zest to every trip and in part compensated for the long and tedious drives and the hardships incidental to them.

In addition to the stage routes to Bath and to Boston, there were shorter ones between the local settlements, starting from Thomaston as a focus. An interesting story is told of a prominent ship builder in "Herring Gut," now Port Clyde, who also had business interests in Waldoboro. Port Clyde is twelve miles to the south of Thomaston, and Waldoboro twelve miles to the west. The fare to each place was twenty-five cents. When the magnate's interests called him to Waldoboro he usually walked to Thomaston by day so "he could see where his quarter went when he rode." After a pause in town he would proceed to Waldoboro after dark in order to be there by daylight in time for his business transactions. One would certainly have to get up in the morning to get ahead of him!

Sometimes good-natured "Matt" Webb, the local coach driver, would overtake him when he had nearly reached his destination in Waldoboro and give him a lift. On one occasion, however, he decided to get the exact measure of the man. The weather was cold and rainy, the mud was deep. He could see the dim fig-

ure trudging along and hear the smack of the mud every time he lifted his feet. Drawing up beside him he offered to take him into the village, a distance of two or three miles, for ten cents. The man declined, saying he would be there by daylight anyway, so he guessed he would walk the rest of the way and save his ten cents.

The man's ample fortune was completely dissipated by the third generation. On her wedding day a grand-daughter ostentatiously walked from her home to the church across the way on red velvet carpeting. It was a beautiful summer day and the road was perfectly dry. A grandson spent his portion on race-horses!

According to the Farmers Almanac for 1832 it was possible to take the stage from Thomaston to Portland, probably with a change at Bath, making stops at taverns in Warren, Waldoboro, Nobleboro, Sheepscot (now Damariscotta and Newcastle); Wiscasset, Woolwich, Bath, Brunswick, Freeport, North Yarmouth, Falmouth and Portland. At Portland one changed for the stage to Portsmouth, passing through Scarborough, Saco, Biddeford, Kennebunk, Wells, York, round by Dover, New Hampshire to Kittery, and then to Portsmouth. At Portsmouth there was another change for Boston, passing through Greenland, Hampton Falls, Salisbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham, Beverly, Salem and Lynn. Any motorist familiar with the route will see at once that it is practically the same to-day, one hundred years later.

The postage rates were slightly higher than to-day. According to the same "*Almanik*," in 1836 the rates were, "Every single letter, 30 miles only, 6 cents; 80 miles only, 10 cents; 150 miles only, 12½ cents; 400 miles only, 25 cents. If a letter contains but the smallest slip of paper within, it pays *double* postage; two pieces within, triple postage; three pieces within, quadruple postage. Every packet weighing an ounce avoirdupois pays quadruple postage; if over an ounce, it is in same proportion. Ship letters left at offices for delivery, 6 cents; sent on by mail, 2 cents in addition to the common postage. Newspapers, 100 miles only, 1 cent; over 100 miles, 1 cent if within the state, and 1½ cents if without the state. Magazines and pamphlets, if periodical, 100 miles only 1½ cents per sheet; over 100 miles 2½ cents; if not



periodical, 100 miles only 4 cents per sheet; over 100 miles, 6 cents."

Envelopes were not then in use. It was customary to write on one side of a sheet of paper, fold the written side in, envelope fashion, and seal with wax. The mounting cost of postage for each extra sheet must have acted as a deterrent to the inditing of long epistles. Can't you hear the howl of "Robbery!" that would go up to-day if one were obliged to pay "6 cents" a sheet for the delivery of say "The Saturday Evening Post?"

In 1849, only six years after the opening of the first telegraph line in the world, Thomaston, thanks to the influence of the Hon. Edward O'Brien, had a telegraph office established in Thomaston. With the bridging of the Atlantic by cable in 1855 Thomaston quickly availed herself of that mode of communication. Messenger boys were kept busy running with cablegrams to and from the many captains in distant ports. Doubtless many of the messages were of a happy nature, but the writer's heart almost skips a beat even now at the recollection of the appearance in the dooryard of the messenger boy bearing his yellow envelope.

Not until the year 1871 did the railroad come through the town. It was a logical advance in communication and transportation, yet there were those who opposed it, as later there were others who opposed the extension of the electric trolley system to Thomaston. Like John Ruskin, who declared that no one with any sense of beauty would ever ride in a railroad train, one Thomaston woman was sure that no one with any honorable errand would ever take passage in one, and prophesied the town would be over-run with "*black leds* and straddlers." Although the woman's prophecy did not come true there was one regrettable incident connected with the coming of the rail—the demolition of the home of Gen. Knox. The loss of that beautiful mansion which was in the so-called path of progress was the price Thomaston had to pay for the Knox & Lincoln Railroad. Of all the group of buildings that composed the estate only one was saved, the farm house, which was and still is used as the railroad station.

With the train there came also the new-fangled notion of passenger tickets. One unsophisticated old gentleman en route to his

daughter's home in Thomaston positively refused to surrender his ticket to the conductor, saying, "No, I'm going to keep it! I want to show Nancy what I paid \$3.50 for!"

Emily Dickinson complained in one of her couplets,

"I wrote the world a letter  
Which never wrote to me."

That state of affairs was probably due to the fact that she lived in an inland town. Had she lived on the seacoast she probably would have had no ground for complaint. For nearly three-quarters of a century Thomaston people in considerable numbers were roaming the high seas. The townsfolk wrote letters to the absent ones and they, in turn, wrote to relatives and friends back home.

Not until comparatively recent times has there been house delivery of mail in the town, therefore the post office was a popular rendezvous for many, many years. With the railroad the mail came in twice a day from the west, and twice a day every footloose person in town made his way to the post office to await its coming and delivery.

The post office was the one place where everybody, young and old, rubbed elbows, and where nobody needed caste, money, clothes, initiation, creed, or fee to explain his presence. The wits of the town used to gather there to exchange banter, the gossips to get the latest news and the general public for their mail and the satisfaction of human contact. As soon as the mail sacks were thrown from the train they were carried to the postoffice by a coach drawn by a span of horses. The shutters of the delivery window were closed and behind them the postmaster and his assistants could be heard deftly sorting the letters and papers. After the last letter had been thrust into its pigeon-hole, the shutters were thrown open and there was a grand rush for the general delivery and the boxes. The little girl who stepped up to the window to inquire, "Grammie wants to know if her 'Ulcerated Journal' has come," had as much right to her place in the line as the business man or the banker, and "so fierce was our democracy" her right was respected.



It goes without saying that probably the usual quota of bills and advertising circulars was doled out, but in practically every bag of mail there would be at least one letter from London, Liverpool, the Chincha Islands, Hong-Kong, Batavia or any one of the other far-flung ports visited by Thomaston vessels.

One of the oldest letters, still in existence, to come to the river was written by David Lermond of Oyster River when he was a prisoner of war at Dartmoor Prison in England. The letter was for years a valued possession of his grandson, Norman Lermond.

The following letter, though not coming to Thomaston, was written in 1814, when it took seven days to travel from Boston to Thomaston. It was from a Thomaston resident describing his trip from Pawtucket to Thomaston. Barring the old fashioned form of the letter "s" it is an exact copy.

Thomaston, October ye 11th, 1814,  
being Tuesday.

Dear children:

The morning is fine and beautiful and we expect Mr. Barrows will soon return to the westward, we therefore take this opportunity to write.

In the first place you no doubt remember we sat out on Monday morning the 19th of September. The day was very cold for the season. We rode to where Capt. Downs used to keep tavern in Walpole, called and refreshed ourselves with a little brandy; the house looked natural being acquainted with it when we lived in Foxborough, about a hundred years ago, in figurative style.

We arrived that night, sun about one hour high in Roxbury street, where we lodged and where they charged us only 20 cents for our lodging and trouble in the house, which was but little if any more than half they charged in each of the other places where we lodged.

We rode into Boston in the morning, where we bought a teapot which cost \$1.25, and a pair of spectacles which cost \$2 which fit very well. We were detained some time in Boston but finally about 10 o'clock we sat out, traveled and took our course for the eastward; took the turnpike road for Newburyport, passed over shocking high hills, and lodged that night in Newburyport. Wednesday morning went through Newburyport, and arrived that

evening at Berwick in the District of Maine. Roads very good as yet, except being very hilly. The next morning we got to Scarborough, and the next morning, being Friday, we went through Portland, Mr. Barrows being kind enough to go several miles out of the way to let us see the town; we rode through several streets but could not afford time to go to the observatory (on Munjoy Hill) which would have afforded us a very great prospect. We left Portland at 10 o'clock and traveled on, arrived that night in Brunswick where we lodged.

The college in Brunswick is a very elegant building in the middle of a pine woods. Saturday morning we crossed the ferry and arrived at Damariscotta Bay where we lodged. We sat out in the morning, being Sunday, and arrived at Martin's house in Thomaston about half after 4 o'clock, sun about an hour and half high—being seven days on our journey, wanting an hour or two.

A few remarks were necessary. In the first place your mother was not much delighted with Boston, it was too large, too populous and too noisy, but Newburyport she admired. She was even in raptures at the lions and tigers that are carved and set up in front of the late Andrew Dexter's house, and look frightful enough to scare a regiment of soldiers, yet to her as well as to me a very pleasing sight. We passed a number of pleasant villages and beautiful houses which have not been mentioned, and which pleased your mother very much, but when we arrived at home, the lofty mountains, the rich fields of corn and grass and the fruitful pastures of Thomaston were by no means pleasing to her and she still sighs for the westward or Pawtucket.

As soon as we got here, we found the town in a general alarm, the enemy threatening an attack at every point, and your poor brother Martin has spent the greater part of his time since hay time in riding about providing for and distributing provisions to the soldiers who are guarding the coast. Being chairman of the selectmen his duty is very fatiguing. The next Thursday after we arrived, the carpenters came to work on the new part of the house, which is joined to the old one, and on Saturday before we had been here a week it was raised and will soon be finished if his master carpenter does not leave him as we are some afraid of, on account of other engagements, trifles.

Your mother insists upon my telling you that although she did not get out of the carriage in Boston yet she observed a number of ladies with long-waisted gowns. Sylvia's cambric sleeves were put



up by mistake and are sent back by Mr. Barrows. The crockery and glassware came safe and nothing broken but one small plate.

Your mama says that if she were at Pawtucket she could tell you more. I must inform you that the roads in general were very good except on Saturday, the last day but one, when some of them were very bad.

We leave you all to the care of Him who is able to keep you and subscribe ourselves, though absent, your loving and tender parents who still remember your infancy and tender age when we loved and dandled you on our knees.

Amariah Marsh

In 1855 Joshua Morton and wife, who had both been sick, went South for the winter for their health. They embarked on one of his vessels. While windbound in the river, Mr. Morton wrote the following letter to the children back home:

“Georges River, Lewis Point, Nov. 28, 1855.

Joshua K. Morton. (17 years of age)

When I left home there is some things I have thought advisable to inform you of—when the new stove is put up be sure that there is zinc put back of it to prevent its taking fire, and also have it well secured in the chimney. If you should need any money, before Charles (a brother) gets home, call on Josephus (a cousin who kept store in the basement of the house), & let him put it to my account. I wish you to be at the head of my affairs at home, & look for the interest and well fare of the family; provide in the way of provisions, such as butter, apples, fresh meat or the kind. I wish you to get about  $\frac{1}{2}$  bushel of *motter* of Edward, when he has some mixed, and point the cellar a little where it is cracked, and try to secure the outside door as well as you can from the frost. The barn wants some little fixing at the stall, so that the hay may not get under foot. Give the cow about two quarts of meal and the heifer 1. per day, and be sure that you think as much of the welfare of your brother as your dogs, at least. I wish you to take the head of all the out door work, see that there is nothing left undone at night and be up in the morning, make fires, and prepare for school in season; be mild in your temper, industrious & do good to all, and God will bless you. William (13 years of age) you see that I have given Joshua the charge of all the outdoor work, that does not exempt you from helping him in cleaning the barn and getting in

wood, and try to do up your work with cheerfulness, any clothing you want to keep you warm and comfortable you can have, and when you need a little change, call on Joshua and he will let you have it. Be a good boy, attend to your school, be kind to your Grandmother and all your sisters & brother and God will bless you.

Margaret (19 years of age) you see that I have given the boys some charge about what I wish them to do, and your Mother and I will give you some hints, that may be proper. We want you to get E. Morse or some other dressmaker to put the family in good order for winter, get H. Butler or some one else to make William clothes for school, and advise him to keep clean, and see that he has stockings & boots, and yourself and sisters will call on Joshua for means to supply things needful. I see that some of the children has rough skin, and some blotches, Olive has on her back. Will you get some sulphur & molasses and give them once or twice a week. and get McAlister's salve and rub over them before going to bed. Be attentive to the wants of your Grandmother ask her advise, and be kind to your sister, take good care of yourself, and dispense of boarders if you wish. (Men who worked in Morton's shipyard boarded at the house.) put my writing desk in the parlor bedroom, take out anything that you want, such as paper pens &c and get Joshua to fasten it for there is some valuable papers that may get lost. also put in the sitting room carpet, your Mother wishes you to see that her Mother is not left alone in the evening for fear that she might have some fainting fit and no one to take care of her—be kind to Olive and see that she is kept from cold and exposure.

Hester (15 years of age) a word to you. I suppose you will go with Frances (an older sister) a spell, if you do, you can take a bed as there will be spare ones, take good care of her. and if you go to school be steady and attentive to it and you will have the benefit thereof.

Now Aubigne (11 years of age) let me say a few words to you—remember that your Mother and Father cannot advise with you therefore you must hear to your Grandmother take her advise and help Margaret all you can—be kind to your little sisters. and do all the good you can, and love & serve God and he will reward you.

Florilla (9 years of age) I will say a few words to you, remember that you are young, and need advise, hear to what your Grandmother may say to you & help your sisters be kind to everyone, love and serve God, and he has promised to be your friend.

Now little Olive (3 years of age) your Mother and Father is



going away to be gone all winter, you must mind your grandmother (poor Grandmother!), be good and keep in the house in cold stormy weather and I will make you a present. (An interesting bit of psychology. No future rewards of God's blessings for her, but a *present!* Something her infantile mind could grasp.)

Mother, we have been giving the children some advise, but they will be likely to forget it, we wish you to look a little to these wants and make yourself at home, be contented and stay with the family if you can, and you shall be rewarded for it, if we live to return; & if we never should we hope you will in Heaven.

Now dear children I have given you a hasty sketch of my wishes, I want that you should remember that in doing so you not only please your parents but are mostly benefited yourselves. Be good to each other, attend meetings and Sunday School, love and serve God in the days of your youth, and if this should be the last reproof from your Father and Mother, take the Bible for your guide, read it carefully and attentively and it will be a sure guide and God will help in every time of need.

Joshua, in about two weeks write us to New Orleans in care of Wm. McLellan—let us know how you get along—and get Margaret to put in her slip with as many others as has anything to say. Aubigne let me hear something from you. Florilla can't you let me hear something from you it will be pleasing.

Joshua Morton.

A native of Thomaston, now deceased, vouched for the authenticity of the following letter written by a retired Thomaston sea cap'n to his son, master of a vessel, in Cuban waters at the time. No date is given and since the contents were a matter of memory the wording may not be exact, but having knowledge of the age and disposition of the parties involved the writer presents it here.

“Dear Son: When I was young I loved the world and the world loved me, but since then a dark cloud has come over the world and I hate the world and the world hates me. Your brother, Benny, is a noble boy. He is going to the academy this winter and will board to Paul Seavey's where he will finish his education. If perchance you can get a bbl. of sugar and a bag of coffee would like to have

you bring them home to me. Take care of your health and don't get caught in a hot and unhealthy climate.

Your father,

—————

From Archangel in northern Russia came the following letter from a sea captain to his wife in South Thomaston in 1861:

*"Arkangel, July 23, 1861.*

Dear Abby,

It is with pleasure that I take this time to inform you that we are here safe. We arrived here the 16. I have got my ballast out and took in 400 bbls. tar yesterday and am now writing for deals. I have been well ever since I left home and Luther is well (his wife's brother). I expect you think that I am out of the world altogether up here so far. Well, it is a good way from home. It is very warm and pleasant weather here.

There are a good many things cheap here that I should buy if I knew that I should come home. I expect we shall go to Liverpool from here, but shall not know until we are loaded, and from there it is hard to tell which way. I think if the war holds on there will not be any thing to do at home and I shall go the way that I can make the most money, so you must do the best you can without me until I get back, and am in hopes to soon for I get homesick sometimes. I wish you was with me and all the children, too, and I suppose you wish so too. I should like to see the children and the little one I have not seen. I expect that they have most forgotten me . . . I expect it is hard times with the Boston coasters now, and think it is lucky that I am out of it.

I think we shall stock £600 sterling up here and back and hope to do it in three months, and will be better business than I could do, if I had come home I think.

I would like to hear how the war is getting along, but you cannot hear anything in this country for there are no papers allowed to come into it from any country. It is as warm here as it is at home at this time of year and about 250 vessels here, 5 are American. I shall send you some money when I get to England and you must be as prudent as you can and when I get the debts paid up we will build a home. I think what I can send home next time will square all up and leave me  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the vessel free of debt. Give my respect to your father and mother and all the rest . . .



Tell Alice I am going to buy her something pretty here; tell George and Luther I will buy them something too.

I am going to buy you a piece of linen here for it is very cheap here, and fine linen. I will write to you again when we get loaded and let you know where we are going to, and I want you to write all the news and what the owners say, and tell your father to write. Tell your father the bark is a fast *sailor* and I have not found anything this side the Pond that will outsail her and she will go 12 knots easy.

I miss you to mend my clothes for they are most to pieces and my shirts are getting poor; some would be good with a little mending. I shall have to get a good many clothes in England. Kiss all the children for me and I will pay them back to you when I get home. I cannot think of any more to write this time, but will write again soon

Ever yours  
W. S. Crockett.

Children, too, sometimes took their pens in hand when they remembered their playmates back home. The following letter was written by a little Thomaston girl while on a voyage with her father and mother.

Liverpool, Sept. 13th, 1866

My dear Cousin

I am away off in Liverpool and I often wish you was hear too. I have some nice times playing with my dolly. I have a swing. Mother and the mates swing me and me and the steward do have such nice times after supper. But do not think I play all the time for Mother has a school every day and Jennie is her scholar. Aunty wrote you went to school. I expect you will get to be a teacher before I shall. I like going to sea. I am not frightened one bit, nor seasick either.

Jennie.

From Batavia, Java came the following letter from *Aubigne C.*, daughter of Joshua Morton, to her sister in Thomaston.

Batavia, June 29, 1875—Tuesday.

. . . . .

All the sight seeing I ever beheld—going through tunnels not excepted I saw the day I went ashore . . . We are going again

early in the morning, so I must go to bed soon or I'll be too tired to feel interested . . . The stores or bazaars are all kept by Chinese that can only say a word or two in English and that is "how much?"—but I am a little ahead.

When we arrived at the landing there stood an exact counterpart of grandpa Fales' four wheeled carriage, only it was a little lower down, if memory serves me right, and the driver had a seat up higher in front, but the old chaise was there just the same. One stepped in with one of our coolie boatmen, with a rag tide over his lousy head for a hat—a blue flannel coat on—and linen pants and bare-footed, his coat open all the time showing his breast-works to everybody—and the driver ditto in dress, took up his rope reins & the way that little span of horses went was a caution. By the way the horses here are only the size of ponies and real smart and strong and can be bought for \$1.00. Who would walk in this hot country?

After quite a long drive we came to the funniest place, where there were booths or tents built of bamboo, about fifty 'leven all connected. It was a very warm day and it seemed quite nice to dodge in and out without getting in the sun. Only when I didn't *scooch* in entering, I'd bring up suddenly by the head or hat. The Chinese "pig-tails" were jabbering & trying to talk, but I didn't know what they said and I looked at our *protector* and he looked so much worse than he did in the boat that I was afraid. Olive (her sister) had been there before, so she went on as unconcerned as you please.

Well! We looked at the print in all the places and finally made a few purchases. They ask a big price—and the customer says "Too high," then out come "How *mootch*?" We say about half, and they laugh and shake their heads, but finally let it go at your price. But they got us after all. We bought twelve yards for a \$1.00 or 2½ guilders—their money is all guilders or roupees. Came aboard much elated with our bargains. I bought two print dresses, two aprons, and some lining . . . While parading something out on the table it looked short, so we began to measure and found our 12 yds. had dwindled to 9½. Our countenances fell . . . They sell by the ell, and the dictionary says it is 1¼ yds., but they make it ¾ of a yd. I managed to get a wrapper out by piecing it . . .

To-morrow we are going to try our luck in some larger stores. I saw so much and everybody looked so funny, and they do things so funny, that I'll have to take a week to tell you about it after I get home. I hope the mail tomorrow will have some letters for us but we hardly dare expect any.



There is plenty of fruit here but we eat very sparingly of it. In fact I don't like it as well as I do our own kind, such as apples, oranges, peaches and pears. Pomegranates I don't care much for; pineapples are nice, but the most dangerous to eat; cocoanuts to eat with a spoon *I can't go*—the milk is nice though. There is another sickish little thing, I don't know the name. We have some on board. Bananas I can eat for want of something better. They are very good, but my mouth doesn't water for them. I shall have quite an assortment of curiosities that have been given me.

". . . Well! it will be impossible to spend the 4th with any of you, but I may be permitted to spend Christmas with you . . . How are you getting along in spiritual things? I hope you are happy and that your faith grow stronger in your Saviour, but remember whatever you do or however you may feel, don't forget to take it to the Lord in prayer—if we forget to pray all is lost.

Your sister, Aubigne

She never returned to give a personal account of her trip. In less than a week's time she was dead of Asiatic cholera brought on by eating some of the fruit she had so interestingly described. Her body lies in a cemetery in Batavia.

The following letter describing a visit to Pitcairn Island was written in the South Pacific Ocean in 1875, by Capt. Warren Mills of the ship *Eliza McNeil*.

At daylight we were nearly up to Pitcairn's Island, having made the island at dusk the night before, and with a light breeze jogged along, laying by a short time during the night, but about seven in the morning, a boat came off to the ship loaded with fruit. The people thought that I was Captain Scribner of the ship *St. John*, as he had called there twice before, and told them that he would be there about the middle of December, 1874. They asked to come on board, so I granted them the privilege. Ten altogether, asking if I wished for the fruit. Deeming at the same time that it was a small Christmas present, I accepted it, and they stayed to breakfast. As there was a light breeze, they wanted me to go on shore with them. After breakfast I went on shore and went to church with them. They use the Church of England service, and the man who officiated spoke of Christ being born over 1800 years ago, and of the great joy in Bethlehem. I was quite surprised at the intelligence and fluency

with which he addressed the people, some forty I suppose there were in the church.

I believe you are acquainted with THE MUTINY OF THE BOUNTY. These are descendants of the mutineers. All have a sleight cast of the Pacific Islanders. That is, rather dark, but not very much. They speak English correctly. All are very religious. All well acquainted with the Bible. Their phrases and ways of expression Biblical. Always asking the blessing before and as soon as a meal is finished. No profanity, slang, nor quarrels are heard of here. All seem to love one another with brotherly love. Having no money or any thing that would take the place of it, all trading is done by bartering.

After church which was in the forenoon, I must take dinner with them. Christmas dinner on shore and as fine a dinner as I could wish. I can not begin to describe it, and I will not try. Almost everything but turkey. A couple of young ladies, one on each side. One about 20 years of age, the other 24, not ashamed to tell their age, and quite lively, enjoying my company, talking and even carrying on conversation the same as if they were accustomed to it daily instead of yearly, for cases like this seldom occur to them. After dinner I went all around visiting each family, for they all have separate houses, and very nice houses they are, too.

Perhaps you may wonder what I ate with and out of. Well, the knives and forks were not silver, but they were good steel knives and forks with bone handles. The dishes were good crockery, nice white table cloth, and everything clean and nice.

Speaking with their teacher, who is a native, but the son of an English sailor, who offered his services there a long time ago, about the islands, the people and what a happy place it was, how they were Christ's children, no exceptions, and how happy they must all be.

"Well," says he, "we are a sinful lot. We have our trials and troubles."

They number eighty-three altogether, being only twelve families. The rest are all children. There are four or five marriageable young ladies, and no young men for them to marry.

One old lady who took quite a fancy to me, and showed me around, said she had sixteen children, twenty-one grandchildren, she being about fifty years of age. This was at the table. I told her I thought she had done pretty well, to which they had a hearty laugh.



When I left, they took off a lot of fruit, stopped a little while on board and bade me goodbye. They were afraid they would never see me again, but I told them that the next time I came this way I would call, if the wind and weather would permit. Telling them that I had passed there twice before, once quite close, and telling them when it was, they seemed to remember it, for they do not have much to see outside of the vessels passing the island, which they say are very few, it having been forty-four days since any vessel was there up to the time of my calling. They finally left, wishing me a pleasant and quick passage and Godspeed me on. They would always remember me and look for me next year. Well, to sum up my Christmas presents: a quarter of a young hog, a quarter of mutton, three chickens, one cat, about a dozen squashes, two watermelons (hardly time for watermelons and cocoanuts), two dozen young cocoanuts, about five hundred oranges, fifty pineapples, two or three big bunches of bananas, one dozen eggs, a lot of yams and sweet potatoes and several other nicknacks.

They asked for nothing but what I felt like giving them for the fruit, which they did not consider much.

When I was on shore they wanted me to take just what I wanted. All of them saying, "What ever you see that you want, why take it." I gave them a barrel of flour, a little medicine and a few other little things which I could spare. They seemed to feel too well paid for what they gave me. If you could only have one good smell of the *Eliza McNeil's* after cabin, it would do you good, for it is all strung up with pineapples, oranges, and bananas, a splendid perfumery. I suppose in all I lost about thirty miles by stopping but that is not much, taking into consideration the benefit derived from it, and have been very glad that I stopped there twenty-seven days from San Francisco.

A Thomaston boy of seventeen, John Lermond, wrote the following letter to an aunt in Warren.

On board the S. D. Carleton

In lat. 18-38 lon.

132 days out.

Dear Aunt Maria

Knowing you will be very anxious about our safe arrival as we will be longer than was expected, I will commence this letter in time so as to give you the full particulars of the voyage.

The word may reach you before this letter does, that the ship was dismantled on the other side of Cape Horn, that is, we lost top gallant, royal and sky sail masts and all the yards on them on the fore mast, the same on the main and the royal and sky sail mast on the mizzen. You look on the picture of the ship and imagine the four upper yards and two masts on the fore and main and two yards and a mast on the mizzen hanging and swinging about, and I think you can judge what kind of a mess we were in. I was on the watch on deck from four to eight and I had been turned in one hour when the mate called me and told me that the masts were falling. The waves were washing over her and you could not walk along the deck without holding on to something. The carpenter was running storm oil all the time, I think the mate and Capt. thought that she rolled the masts out of her, as all the sails were furled up snug.

All hands worked that day and slept that night, except the man at the wheel and on the lookout, and the next day all hands worked all day.

As fast as anything was got down from aloft it had to be lashed. The mate says we got around the Horn very easy as it was not very cold and we did not get any heavy storms so as to have to run back. We have seen land but three times since we left. The first was the island of Fernando De Noranka, *lat 3-50-108, Lon 32-22 W.* It is an island 8 miles long and looked mountainous, ragged, but it is fertile. It is a place of banishment from Brazil. The second island was Staten Land, we saw that for two days I think: there is a light-house there, no other people and high barren mountains, it must be very lonely there.

And then Cape Horn—I have seen that and am satisfied. Mr. Hatch said that Percy (an older brother) had never seen that; it looked very pretty at sundown that night. We came within one of seeing the island of Juan *Finandes*. We passed within sixty miles of it and would have been close enough had not the wind shifted.

The Captain looked and looked for it with his glasses but it could not be seen. The ship was 23 days in the doldrums on the Atlantic, that is, from 3' north to 3' south. Then we had a calm of days on the Pacific side, the latter was very hard to bear as every day seemed an age.

May 8.

The ship is sailing along very well and it is hoped we will be in Frisco this day week, but have been disappointed so much lately



that I suppose we will have to be over that time, it is sister Marcia's birthday to-day. I forget whether she is nineteen or twenty. From 10-12 N. on the Pacific is a great place for turtles. The mate put a boat out to try and catch one; the second mate and two men went. They harpooned one or two but did not get them. When they came back they said sharks ahead attacked the boat, there *was* five around the boat and one big fellow went under the boat and like to lift her out of water.

The second mate pricked one or two with the harpoon to keep them away from the boat, but did not dare to harpoon one as the others would be wild at the sight of blood.

The mate shot one shark that afternoon (Saturday), and the next day he killed five. Those were the first sharks I had ever seen and I don't care about seeing any more. That day at noon it was 112' hot in the shade. The mate and second mate caught three or four albatross, the mate had the carpenter stuff two, the first wasn't good, the second one is hanging in the engine room and is about 12 ft. from tip to tip. He has got it for a Maine friend out here, I caught two, the first was drowned before I got him and so was no good; the second broke the Captain's and mate's codfish line while I was pulling him in; he got a good brace with his feet. There was plenty more after that but I did not fish again.

Going around the Horn from 40' to 40' we had chocolate every night at twelve o'clock in the cabin. the second mate made it one night and I the next.

One man died the 5th of May and was buried at sea. The man came on deck at 12 o'clock seemingly in good health; the mate was sick that night and the Captain was taking his watch. The man got up in a corner and was going to have a good nap as the mate was not around. I was down below with the mate when all at once there was a noise like something chafing, then the Capt. sung out for me to bring a lantern, when I got there the man was dead. The next morning he was sewed in canvas with a heavy sand bag at his feet. At half past seven all hands were called and the man was put on a long plank, the *Capt.* read a prayer and they slid him off the plank into the sea. It was a sight I never want to see again. About two weeks after this we had a man go crazy. He was bad for about one week but is better now.

I am sorry the ship has been so long on your account as I know you will worry so much. Yesterday afternoon I could see seven ships from aloft, the most of them bound to Frisco. There

are three or four ahead of us now and I am afraid it will be hard to get a tug. a small barkentine passed close enough to speak to her, after the *Capt.* found the correct longitude he asked him what the news was, or if any one was dead. The *Capt.* replied that P. T. Barnum was dead, or it sounded like that. Night before last a St. John's ship crossed our bow close enough so you could see her name with the aid of glasses but could not read it.

Yesterday morning I could see four ships. We had a fine breeze all day yesterday until about four o'clock when the wind all died away. It has been calm ever since. Thursday afternoon—we can see land and are about forty miles from where we take a pilot and tug. We are in hopes of getting a tug tomorrow morning if we have any wind to-night. The second mate's watch are unbending the Cross Jack and our watch got the anchor ready this afternoon.

I am very anxious to get news from home and I sincerely hope that all is well. It wouldn't do for us to be out much longer as we are on the last half of the last barrel of flour and a few things in comparison. I have written a long letter to sister Marcia and want to write to Marcia Hayden and Mrs. McCobbe.

I will close for this time, you may expect another as soon as I get news from home.

I am going to have about 60 dollars coming to me when I get in. The 5 I had in *Phi.* and 11.60 in the slop chest.

Please give my love to all who inquire for me and keep a lot for yourselves.

From your ever loving nephew,

'Percy' alias John Lermond.

Dear Aunt:

We arrived this morning at six o'clock, I got 5 or 6 letters from home and glad I was to hear that all was well.

We *was* 164 days out. Marcia wrote me about the launching of the Bath ship. She was unloading while I was in *Philda.*

She got here 4 or 5 days ago. I can also see the *Gov. Ames.*

We are expecting to dock directly and I want to get posted as soon as possible, in haste.

Tell Herbert I am going to send him something nice.

Oh! that all the letters could have been saved which came and went between the towns on the Georges and the far-flung sea-



ports of the world! What a story they could tell! And, stamp collectors, what treasures have been lost to you just because “pizen-neat” housekeepers included old letters in the category of “*culch*” and ruthlessly destroyed them!

## *Charles Ranlett Flint*

OF ALL THE THOMASTON boys who made places for themselves in the outside world, perhaps none ever reached a higher rung in the ladder of business and finance than Charles Ranlett Flint. As he facetiously said of his predicament when he was ready to put his foot on the first rung of that ladder which leads to dizzying heights, "I was ready for business, but business was not ready for me." Coming from resourceful stock, he didn't let that situation daunt him for a moment. If he couldn't climb other people's ladders, he would build his own. This he immediately proceeded to do. It was not long before the business world became alarmingly aware of his presence. To their consternation they found that this young man for whom they had not been ready had a "fine flare for doing big things in a big way" and that he was taking a firm here, an agency there, a corporation somewhere else, anywhere that he could lay his hands on them, and combining them into "Trusts" the like of which the people had never before beheld. So many of these combines did he create that he was dubbed "The Father of Trusts." That some of these creations went astray and became such dangerous outlaws that Theodore Roosevelt, the crusader, was roused to go on a "trust-busting" campaign was no fault of Charles R. Flint's. He created them in good faith. Many a parent has had to bow his head in shame because of the conduct of his offspring.

That he should build a navy for the Republic of Chile, purchase another for the Czar of Russia, and fit out the "Dynamite Fleet" which aided the establishment of the Republic of Brazil was not surprising. He came of a shipbuilding family and was at home in the realm of ships. The surprising thing was that he did not choose to follow the sea, to become a master mariner, or if that did not offer sufficient scope for his ambition, to become



a commodore or an admiral in the navy. His ambition did not lie in that direction, however. He said that as a young boy, whereas the highest desire of most of the other Thomaston lads was to throw their caps over the "main truck" of some vessel, his one ambition was to organize and to charter fleets of vessels.

Flint was considered an expert in South American affairs. At different times he was consul to the United States for several Latin-American countries and once served as delegate to an International Conference of American Republics.

In the Brazilian Revolution of 1889-90 the Emperor Dom Pedro was exiled to Portugal and a Brazilian Republic set up. Some years later friends of the monarchy attempted to overthrow the Republic. Flint fitted out the fleet of war vessels, called the "Dynamite Fleet," which aided in keeping the northern provinces on the side of the Republic. He always felt he did more than any other one person to preserve the Brazilian Republic. He sold guns to Turkey, warships to Japan and during the Spanish-American War arranged for the purchase of additional naval vessels by the United States government.

He was the first native of Thomaston to stand before kings. In connection with the negotiation for the Russian fleet he appeared in Moscow with a letter of credit from the Rothschilds for \$35,000,000. During the course of his negotiations he had a personal interview with the Czar who presented him a drinking cup. Then, there was the audience with King Leopold II of Belgium. The president of the American Rubber Company asked Flint to negotiate with the Belgian king for the entire rubber output of the Belgian Congo. The conversations were carried on in English which Leopold spoke perfectly. Naturally, each was trying to drive a bargain. After Leopold had stated his final terms most explicitly and the "Yankee Trader" was still holding out reluctantly, Leopold, unable to fathom the depths of this other's native shrewdness, suavely asked, "Do I make myself clearly understood in English?" He did. His price was too high. No bargain was made.

Charles Ranlett Flint was born in Thomaston, January 24th, 1850. He was named for Capt. Charles Ranlett, a shipbuilder

and master mariner. His father, Benjamin Flint, was a builder and managing-owner of ships in the good old clipper ship days when an American vessel could show its heels to anything afloat, and when the Yankee trade had nosed its way into every port of the world. His home was in that part of the town called the "upper corner." The family shipyard, the Chapman and Flint yard, was on the river bank back of the prison.

Like all wide awake boys Charles R. haunted the wharves and ship yards, where he climbed all over the vessels in process of construction, and went aboard vessels tied up at the wharves. These interests palling, there was always a rowboat bobbing up and down at her moorings challenging him to come for a row, or a catboat for a cruise down the river. On one such cruise he met the man for whom he was named sailing up the river on his return from a trip of exploration to the Arctic.

Fishing, too, was a favorite sport. Being a very active boy, and the pursuit of all his usual diversions being deemed wicked on a Sunday, he used his superfluous energy that day by pumping the church organ. He used to delight to tell the following story. When a small boy he went fishing from the river bank one day. Fearing his line might slip from his fingers he tied it through the buttonhole of his coat. In his enthusiasm he fell off the rocks into the water. Since he could not swim his only hope was in prayer which was answered by his own forethought. Fortunately the line which he had thought to save by attaching it to his buttonhole, in turn saved him by catching in the crevice of the rock on which he had been standing. By means of it he was able to pull himself ashore and climb out. When telling his grandmother of his narrow escape she told him he never would have been saved if he had not gone to church three times every Sunday and regularly blown the church organ.

Of his early life in Thomaston Flint wrote: "Thomaston, Maine, had been building ships since 1787. Old men were libraries of sea lore. They told me when I was but a boy, of the slave trade and the sea rovers, of what going down to the sea in ships meant in the old days. I well remember the small arsenals carried by our vessels in the Sixties and how the merchant ships



had gun ports painted on their sides to make them look like men-of-war that they might frighten away Chinese and Malay pirates."

Perhaps it was early familiarity with his father's and his family's shipping interests that led him to think in terms of fleets of vessels rather than in mastery of a single one. His father and his uncle under the firm name of Chapman and Flint built vessels in Thomaston until their yard was cut in two by the coming of the railroad in 1871. Their first vessel, the *Frank Flint*, (1857), paid for herself on her first voyage, a round trip from New York to New York by way of 'Frisco and Liverpool, and then was sold for more than she cost. After the coming of the railroad, the yard was moved to Bath.

While many vessels were built by numerous firms in Thomaston few retained their Thomaston ownership. They were sold to shipping companies in other ports, chiefly New York. The two brothers, Chapman and Flint in 1837 organized a shipping company known as Flint and Company doing business in New York. The fact that they maintained an account with Baring Brothers in London for many years gives some measure of the scope of their business. The House of Flint of which Charles R. later became a member owned the second largest fleet of vessels sailing under the American flag. Their vessels sailed chiefly from New York to San Diego, San Francisco and Seattle. The chief competitor of this line was the house of Dearborn, also of New York. In the course of time the two houses combined under the firm name of Flint, Dearborn & Co.

Flint's father and uncle had named their ships after the saints: *St. Mark*, *St. Lucy*, *St. John*, *St. Nicholas*, *St. James*, *St. Francis*, and so on. Since their record had been unmarked by accident for many years they decided to rely wholly upon the protection of the saints, and stopped carrying insurance. Everything continued to go well until they named one of the vessels *W. R. Grace*. She went ashore after anchoring inside the Delaware Breakwater and was a total loss. Another ship, the *Charles R. Flint*, on a voyage to Japan with a cargo of oil, took fire and burned to the water's edge. No wonder the owners began to think there was something in a name.

After the Civil War the Flints realized that sailing ships could not compete with steamers of large carrying capacity and moderate speed. They therefore sold their ships in California for use in the lumber and coal trade. Deeming it unwise to let go with one hand before taking hold with the other, the firm seized the opportunity to exploit the Hawaiian trade. The American-Hawaiian Steamship Company was organized by the Flints with headquarters in San Francisco. Capt. Burnham, port captain for the line, remained in the Flint employ twenty years. Those who got in on the ground floor realized a profit of 500% on their original investment.

While still a young lad, Flint's family moved to New York in order to be in close touch with its shipping interests. Charles attended school there, and at eighteen was graduated from Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Being extremely energetic and self-confident, he made the rounds of every shipping house in New York immediately after graduation. It was then that he was momentarily surprised to find in answer to his knock that business, the grudging old dame, was out or was shaking her head discouragingly from an upper-story window. That was all right. If Business would not come down and open the door for him, he would climb the ladder to her. The lowest rung might be crowded, but he knew there is always room at the top. He decided to become a dock clerk, and, presto! he became a dock clerk. To prove it he had cards printed announcing the fact. To be sure, he might have had cards printed claiming himself to be a dock superintendant, President of the United States, or anything his fancy might dictate, but he knew better than that. He would begin at the beginning with something plausible. A dock clerk's task was to measure, receive, and deliver cargoes of vessels. While ordinarily such a clerk must have been in the employ of some established house, it must also have been an open, competitive field, for young Flint was too well aware of all the ramifications of the business of shipping houses to be caught in an untenable position.

"At that time," he said, "the waterfront glistened with brightly varnished masts, spars, and a long line of bowsprits rigged out with jib-booms that reached way across South Street." With his



father he had made weekly visits to this waterfront for many years so he had a first-hand knowledge of every wharf, shipping office and practically every vessel sailing in and out of the harbor. Because of that knowledge he was justified in believing he possessed all the earmarks of a qualified dock clerk, and that he could earn at least as much as one regularly employed at the initial salary of four dollars a week!

Fortune favoring the brave, business soon began to come his way. He found numerous cargoes to deliver, among other merchandise, wine. We of this day and generation have heard so much about bootlegging that we have come to think of it as something peculiar to prohibition days. It was, however, rampant in "the good old days" before prohibition was even dreamed of and when bootlegging was actually bootlegging. Wharf thievery of all sorts of merchandise was almost a profession in the underworld of that day, the wine thieves being perhaps the most ingenious of all. When young Flint had a cargo of that to deliver he had to keep on his toes. Some of the thieves operated from beneath the wharves, boring holes in the casks and draining the contents into containers aboard boats that lurked under the piers. One man, instead of concealing his booty in his boots, contrived a tin-lined coat into which he could siphon the wine while he was apparently idly loitering about. Shakespeare said, you know, "There are land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves." In waterfront idiom, "These was them."

Flint's ambition did not allow him to long remain content with the prospects offered by his position as dock clerk. He was eager to advance and to identify himself with some well established firm—if he possibly could, with the William R. Grace Co., a subsidiary of the firm of Grace, Bryce and Company which had just opened a New York office. Grace was a family friend and might have been approached as such, but young Flint decided to contact him in a more subtle way. He would meet him, as if by chance, on the ferryboat and offer him his services, not for a dollar a year, but without any compensation whatever until Grace could determine the value of the services. His plan worked to a "T." The casual meeting came off according to schedule and the offer was made. Such humility, coupled

with such a fair and generous offer appealed to Grace who accepted the young man's proposal, humorously saying that was probably all his services were worth. Flint soon showed his employer, however, that he not only had ability but that he knew how to use it and that in his lexicon there was evidently no such word as overtime. He often worked not only ungrudgingly, but willingly from 7:30 in the morning until 11:00 at night. Recognition of his ability and industry came quickly, for Grace was a man who recognized ability when he saw it and who used it to good advantage when it was his to command.

Soon after becoming established in the firm Flint and Grace's father-in-law, Capt. George *Gillchrest*, were left in charge of the business while Grace made a trip to Europe. Finding they worked well together the two established a ship chandlery business under the firm name of Gillchrest, Flint & Company. Later Grace invited Flint to join him in organizing the W. R. Grace Company. The new company, called Casa Grace in South America, did a general shipping business largely with Bryce, Grace, and Company of Callao, Peru. In addition to operating a line of sailing ships running to the west coast of South America, as brokers they chartered vessels to bring back guano and nitrate of soda from Chile. The Grace Company, still in existence, has been and perhaps may still be considered the lifeline of the South American continent. Close association with his father and other members of his family engaged in the shipping business gave the young man valuable experience to bring both to the Grace and the Flint firms. In addition to his participation in the establishment of the W. R. Grace Company he was instrumental in the formation of the American Chicle Company, the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company, the American Woolen Company, and the United States Rubber Company.

Flint was a dyed in the wool Yankee. He had an active mind. He was shrewd. He loved to bargain. He had a keen sense of humor and above everything else he was resourceful. Flint's keenness of mind and his Yankee resourcefulness were never better displayed than in his method of procuring the services of a physician in a strange country.

While on his mission to St. Petersburg he was taken sick. Not



knowing where to turn for competent medical aid he telegraphed the agent of the New York Life Insurance Company telling him he was sick and that the Company carried a policy of \$2,000,000 on his life. His terse message, "Send a physician at once and save your money," brought an immediate response. Flint reported he was never cured of an illness so quickly in his life.

Becoming solicitous over the health of a friend he once consulted a physician concerning him, suggesting to the physician that setting-up exercises might prove helpful. The doctor disagreed saying such exercises were too vigorous. Flint said he had not found them so. The doctor replied, "You are different. At the Judgment Day you will have to be shot."

He could enjoy a good story even when the laugh was at his own expense. His autobiography is sprinkled with such stories. Being a total abstainer his abstinence was a topic for much jocularity on the part of his friends. At one time as he entered a club on crutches because of the gout a wit said, "If Flint's got the gout, why not take to drink?" The distinguished cosmopolite that he was, he did not realize that he was also typically American until one day when he disembarked from a steamer at Dublin where he was met by a crush of hackmen. One shouted, "Right up Broadway, Sir!" Choosing him, Flint stepped into his cab and said, "Why do you take me for an American? All the clothes I have on are English-made. I am wearing an English hat, my luggage is English, and I have an English umbrella and cane. How in the world did you know I was an American?" "By your *illigant* manner, of course," was the quick response.

The opening remarks of a speech once made by Flint before the Illinois Manufactures Association gives some idea of the grasp of his ideas and of his forceful manner of expressing them:

"A combination of labor is a trade's union; a combination of intelligence, a university; a combination of money, a bank; a combination of labor, intelligence, and money is an industrial consolidation—Work, Brains, Money."

In later life when well established in business Flint got much pleasure from his yacht aboard which he entertained a host of friends. In the log book of that yacht was an entry by Frank A. Munsey which read: "To a New England Boy: the New England

boy is born with two great overshadowing purposes in life—purposes that are his whole life from the cradle to the grave: getting on in the world, and getting into Heaven.” Under the entry Chauncy Depew jotted down: “But the methods of one close the door to the other.”

Munsey was a Lisbon Falls native who as a New York publisher made \$40,000,000 in forty years.



## *“Down to the Nor’ard”*

THE HYMN WRITER who linked the icy mountains of Greenland with the coral strands of India must have had some salt water in his veins, or have been in close touch with people who had. It was the most natural thing in the world for seafaring folk to link the opposite ends of the world together and, if called upon to do so, to start without hesitation to traverse the distance between those extremities. So, when one day in the middle of the nineteenth century, Prof. P. A. Chadbourne of Williams College, remarked to Capt. Charles E. Ranlett of Thomaston, “Some day I’m going to Greenland,” it was perfectly natural for Capt. Ranlett to counter with, “When you go, I will take you.” The bargain was struck. Professor Chadbourne had never been to Greenland, but he had been to Newfoundland for scientific study. Capt. Ranlett had never been to Greenland either, but he had been to India and probably had a “’satiabile curiosity” to see the other end of the axis.

Early in January, 1860, Capt. Ranlett received a letter from Professor Chadbourne announcing that sufficient financial backing having been assured he was ready to make the trip the following summer, and asked, “Will you find a suitable vessel and estimate the cost of taking me and a party of students?” He wanted to start in time to observe the total eclipse of the sun July 18th.

To find a suitable vessel was the easiest thing in the world, for Capt. Ranlett had his own staunch schooner, the *Nautilus*, built the preceding year, which was chafing its sides off to do just that sort of thing. As soon as the final agreement was reached, the ’tween decks of the vessel were ceiled with cotton cloth, carpeted, curtained, and fitted with berths to accommodate the students, twenty in number, who, with the exception of one,

were college graduates or undergraduates. Eleven were from Williams; three from Bowdoin—Alpheus Spring Packard of the class of '61 in the group; two, from Harvard, and one from Columbia. The professor was to share the after cabin with the captain. Supplies of provisions, scientific apparatus, dredges, material for dressing skins; rifles, ammunition and trinkets for the Eskimos were stowed in the hold.

When all was in readiness the young men came to Thomaston where they were received with open arms by the hospitable town folk. At five o'clock in the morning of the 27th of June a crowd of well-wishers gathered on the wharf, the Unitarian minister offered prayer, and all waved a cheery farewell as the vessel, with all sails set, went out of sight around Brown's Point.

By the 4th of July the *Nautilus* was tossing on the stormy waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. One would hardly expect the young men to have got their sea-legs by that time, for some of them had been wretchedly seasick; but whether they had or not, they staged a celebration as lavish as circumstances would allow. They “dressed ship”; one of their number read the Declaration of Independence; another, a Williams man, wrote and read a poem; a Harvard man prepared and gave an oration; another played patriotic airs on the flute; all fired their shotguns; and the heavens provided the fireworks—a magnificent display of the aurora borealis.

By midnight of the 5th old Boreas pulled a different kind of trick out of his bag. The vessel began to roll and pitch, the wind to howl, and the sails, ropes, and blocks to rattle and to slat. All hands were called on deck to shorten sail. For twenty-four hours they were thrashed about unmercifully and the amateur sailors had a chance to show their mettle. The following day breaking clear, with a pleasant westerly breeze, they sighted two steamers and had their first glimpse of icebergs.

Cautiously nosing their way along, before many hours elapsed they came within sight of the coast of Labrador, which did not look the least bit like an arm of gold as its name signifies, but rather like a great granite brow sullen and frowning. Nearing the shore, they discovered that whereas the mainland was steep and forbidding there were many rocky islands that might furnish



anchorage and shelter from the stormy blast. Taking advantage of one of the inlets, they anchored and went ashore for a brief period of observation. In the sunny, sheltered nooks and crevices of the rocks they found moss and Lilliputian thickets of fir and alder, perfect in form, and varying from only three inches to one foot in height!

On the 7th they arrived at Caribou Island where there was a small colony of fishermen. The island is near Bon Esperance, not far from the Strait of Belle Isle. Fleets of Canadian fishing vessels were lying in the harbor as were several from Newburyport, Massachusetts. Cod was king. The men spent all their effort in pursuit of cod, while a fisher of men, a missionary from Newburyport, spent his time building a church that he might the better minister to their spiritual needs.

The 8th, being Sunday, prayers were said in the cabin of the *Nautilus* and then all went ashore to attend a service in a fisherman's hut. That service was lead by the missionary. The congregation was made up of English, Scotch, and French settlers, crews from the fishing vessels, and members of the expedition. One outstanding family in the group consisted of a sixty-year-old Englishman or "*liver*" known as "Old John Goddard," his full-blooded Eskimo wife and their many children and grandchildren.

Old John was rated as one of the wealthy men of the coast. He carried on an extensive fishing, sealing, and hunting business. His house on the rocky mainland was substantial and well kept. There were rows of brightly polished pewter plates and other dishes on the kitchen shelves and everything was very orderly, quite surprising since the wife was a typical Eskimo woman, who, like Diana, devoted much time to the chase. She was a particularly skillful sealer. Unlike Diana, however, as one member of the party noted, "She looked not unlike a seal," and the way she could "talk seal" fooled the seals themselves. Dressed in her seal skin suit and armed with her trusty shotgun, she would get into her *oomiak*, a woman's *kayak*, and make for the nearest sealing ground. So perfectly did she fit into the picture that few of the creatures were aware of her presence. Hearing perfectly natural noises coming from behind a ledge one of their number more curious than the others would go to investigate. That was the

end of him. Dragging the body up on the ledge, she would arrange it in a life-like attitude, lie down behind it, “talk seal” again, and pick off victim after victim until it was time to go home and get her “old man’s” supper.

The harbor seals, like those on the Maine coast, were taken by the men who stretched nets across the channel, their upper edge just above the water. The mesh of the net was coarse enough to admit the head and neck of the seal. When one became entangled the net was drawn ashore by the aid of a capstan and windlass built of heavy timbers from wreckage. Windlasses were prominent objects all along the shore.

It had been planned to leave a group of the students somewhere on the Labrador shore, while the others of the party proceeded to Greenland. This settlement on Caribou offered sufficient protection for the inexperienced explorers, and, at the same time, was advantageously situated for research. Accordingly, arrangements were made for seven volunteers to remain at the settlement to collect eggs, birds and plants and to dredge for shells. The boys pitched a tent and the men who were helping the missionary build the meeting house put up a shanty for them to sleep in. The services of a Frenchman and his whaleboat were engaged to take them up and down the coast on exploration trips, and oil jackets were secured from the “slop-chest” of a Newburyport brig. Thus the boys were all set for many days and nights ashore or in the open. Everything being provided for their comfort and welfare, the *Nautilus* then set her course for the opposite shore of Greenland.

The boys who were left behind began their task at once. The following day they boarded the whaleboat with their French guide and set out to explore the coast. The boat was a one-masted affair about thirty feet long. It boasted no engine in addition to its one sail, but it was equipped with oars in case the wind failed and they had to resort to a “white ash breeze,” a sailor’s term for rowing.

All along the coast the air was full of sea-birds, and acres and acres of ground were covered with nests so close together they crowded each other. Despite the crowding, with unerring instinct, each bird knew her own. The nests of the eider duck were



lined with down plucked from the mother's breast, and so arranged that when she left it for a few minutes a flap fell over the nestlings to keep them warm until her return. In addition to the birds we usually associate with the North there were many parakeets which nested in burrows in the earth which was chiefly dung. The whole shoreline was strictly a maternity ward. The "fond fathers" were nowhere to be seen. They were probably off in search of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow-colored rays of the aurora borealis which illuminated the heavens night after night; or else goose-stepping back and forth on a farther shore, counting their chickens before they were hatched. The boys were not the first scientific observers to visit the region. Audobon had been there before them.

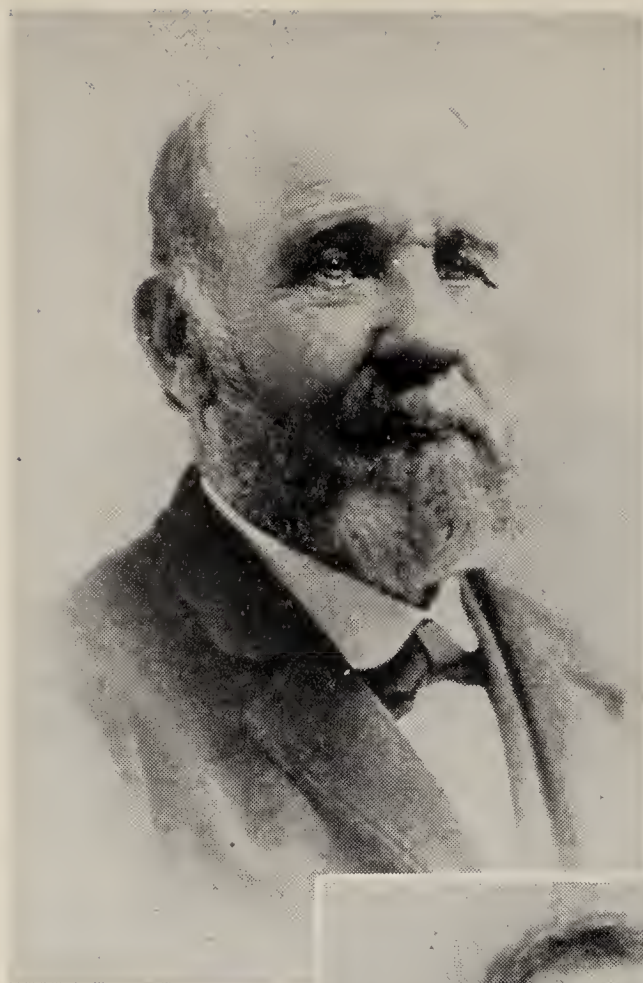
The first night of the initial trip was spent in a fisherman's cottage on the bank of a stream. The occupants were "as poor as Job's turkey" and the house filthy and dirty beyond description, but such as it was, it was wide open to the strangers, who were cordially invited to their board and a bed on the floor.

Although the stream flowing past the door was full of speckled trout, it was evidently too much work to catch fish for food and fish for bait too, so the family lived on caplin, cod bait, a smelt-like fish that came in shoals, and could be caught in quantity. The fish were prepared for eating by sprinkling the undressed fish with salt and drying them in the open. Like the New England farmer in haying time, the settler's one concern was the weather. If a sudden shower threatened, the fish were scraped up quickly and carried under cover. For some reason the supply of caplin on hand at that particular time had not been salted. There were several hogsheads of them and every fish was alive with maggots, great fat, juicy ones, so numerous that one could scrape them up by the fistful from the hollows in the rock where the fish were drying. That was all right so long as the fish were used for bait, but when a whole panful of slightly warmed ones, maggots and all, were served for the main dish at tea, it was almost more than a queasy stomach could stand. The tea, too, was hardly palatable since it was sweetened with molasses. Like the old lady who told the minister when he remonstrated with her about the amount of molasses she was pouring in his tea,



Deck of the *C. S. Glidden* under construction.





Top left: Capt. Peter Vesper. Top right: Mrs. Peter Vesper. They were "saved by prayer" when shipwrecked. Bottom: Edward O'Brien Burgess, A.B., able-bodied seaman.

"If it was all molasses it wouldn't be too good for you," the hostess was very generous with her sweetening. During tea time children crawled over the floor, fussing and whining. An occasional lobster was thrown to them to keep them quiet.

Of course there were dogs in the settlement, but they were so treacherous they were not allowed near their master's table. They had to be kept outside. They were all hobbled by fastening one foreleg to the collar. "As jealous as a dog" is a common saying in Labrador and the truth of the saying was borne out when the dogs killed one of their own number which had been petted by the boys. The boys had to be very careful of their boots, too, as the dogs would devour them if they got a chance, leaving nothing but the nails.

While on that side trip they saw the eclipse of the sun from their open boat. It was a wild, dreary day, with two magnificent spectacles. First came the eclipse in the morning a little after seven, lasting for two hours. Later, about sun down, when gazing westward along the rugged coast the party saw what looked like battlements stretching toward the setting sun. As they looked the formation changed, disappeared, reappeared, then faded away silently as a dream—a mirage!

August first, with a good supply of stuffed birds, eggs, etc., they started back to the main camp, or "up to the s'uth'ard." A member of the party noted in his diary: "They say 'up' here, 'Up to the westward and southward' and 'down to nor'rard.' "

From time to time the question arises, "Where is down East?" The only answer seems to be "Down East is "down East" of "down East."

While the small group was settling to its work on the main, the schooner sped to the nor'east, driven by wild gales. Much ice was encountered in the lane of the Spitzbergen current which blockades the coast of Greenland with ice from May until November. For a time the party was embayed in ice floes which extended as far as the eye could see. After a while they were able to steer northeast past the edge of the pack. Land was in sight but there was nary an opening by which it could be approached. The only thing to do was to anchor among rocky islets and bide their time. Advantage was taken of the stay to make



a study of the birds. The nights were only three hours long, so there was ample time to capture and dress their specimens. Shortly the vessel looked as though it were sprouting feathers. There were birds on the deck, birds in tubs, birds on hooks, and birds hanging on the lines. Deep-water dredging was engaged in, and collections made of the mosses, eggs, and minerals found on the small islands. The only trace of human life encountered was one bleached skeleton. And mosquitoes! It was not necessary to hunt them; they made their own contacts.

Although the boys were not allowed to take the boats at will, one morning the company was aroused by a piercing cry for help. One youth had surreptitiously sneaked off in a boat before the others were up, and was drifting off to sea. A rescuing party was sent to save the man "taken in his sin." He explained that an oar dropped overboard and was carried by the tide in one direction while the wind drifted him in the opposite direction! Breakfast time was quite hilarious at his expense.

The 31st of July, conditions improving, the vessel bore away in the direction of Godthaab, one hundred miles distant. The fogs and rains had set in, permitting only occasional and casual glimpses of the shore with its many glaciers and icebergs. Even the bergs were the home of numerous birds. Boats had to be sent ahead to pick a course in the fog and murk as they had no charts to show the way and there were no lights or buoys to mark the rocks and shoals. Capt. Ranlett had to be his own pilot and make his own chart.

On the eve of the second of August, about sunset, they saw what looked like huge birds flapping their wings near the surface of the water. As they came nearer the strange creatures proved to be Eskimos in *kayaks*. They were hoisted aboard, *kayaks* and all. Unfortunately they brought their own language with them and could give little information. The attempted conversation, to the accompaniment of grunts, groans, gesticulations, and loud voices—when in doubt, raise your voice—went somewhat like this: Yankee to Eskimo,

"Where is Godthaab?"

Horrible stare. No answer.

“Godthaab here?” pointing.

“Ap.”

“Ap, what is ‘ap’?”

Eskimo pointing to flag, “Angelize?”

“No, American.”

Terrible groans on the part of the Greenlanders.

“Where Godthaab, New Hernhut?” very loud.

“Ap, Ap.”

“Ice good?” pointing.

“Na me, Na me.”

Yankees in concert, “What is ‘Na me’?”

Later they learned that “Ap” and “Na me” were simply “yes” and “no.”

One of the natives was then sent ashore with a message to the settlement for help. He came back with a reply that the only thing to do was to wait for the ice to clear. They then anchored in the harbor of a small island to bide their time. While waiting for ice to clear seven of the party made their way in small boats to the settlement where they were hospitably received. They were the first of their countrymen to visit the settlement. While on shore the ice closed in so that even the small boats could not pass. In order to get back they had to drag their boat out of the water, carry it across a floe, launch it on the other side, row to the next floe and continue until they reached the opposite side of the island near which the *Nautilus* was anchored. Toting their boat across that, they finally reached the vessel again.

Several days later boats from four Danish ships tendered their services and towed the schooner within a mile of its desired haven, when ice closed in once more. For awhile the outlook was dubious; then to their great relief the British steamer, H. M. S. *Bull Dog*, Capt. McClintock, appeared and towed the *Nautilus* the rest of the way into the harbor. Capt. McClintock was the famous Arctic explorer for whom Cape McClintock and McClintock Channel were named, and the discoverer of the fate of Sir John Franklin’s party.

The Americans and the British remained in port several days, fraternizing with each other and entertaining the local digni-



taries, Moravian missionaries, a Dutch trader or two, and the natives. About twenty natives were dined aboard the *Nautilus*. They brought their appetites with them and did not attempt to conceal the fact. The women were quite lively and animated compared to their husbands who seemed to be awkward in everything except the management of their *kayaks*.

When ice was favorable the *Bull Dog* once more offered to tow the *Nautilus* out of the harbor. The offer was accepted. It came just in time as fog and ice once more closed in. Moving cautiously south they saw the last of the ice pack when about forty-five miles from Godthaab.

Saturday, August 25th, the *Nautilus* hove in sight of Caribou and came to anchor in the roadstead of Bon Esperance. She was heartily welcomed by the boys who had been on self-imposed exile for more than six weeks. They speedily transferred their belongings and their collections to the schooner that no time might be lost in making their get-away. It was a stormy passage back. There was no observation for three days as the storm tossed schooner nosed her way around Cape Sable and picked her way with constant soundings over the shoals. During the night of the third day the clouds rolled back enabling the captain to take observation by the North Star. Hastening to inform the professor of the glad tidings he was met with, "Oh! the North Star! What does that have to do with us?" To which the captain retorted, "If you had known the North Star for a guide as long as I have you would believe in it." The captain then set his course by the "Sailor's Friend" and in good time the *Nautilus* sailed into the mouth of the Georges.

The spruce-covered shores, the sight of green grass, buildings and cultivated fields were almost like a glimpse of paradise. One of the party entered in his diary: "Last day of voyage most enjoyable of all! The pleasantest and happiest of whole pilgrimage." At 4 P.M., September 11th, they reached the wharf in Thomaston after an absence of two months and sixteen days without injury to vessel or anybody aboard.

Like Doctor Cook, they did not discover the North Pole. Unlike him they did not profess to. They had gone "down nor'rard" with the modest ambition of viewing an eclipse of the

sun, of making a personal study of the region and its flora and fauna, and collecting specimens. From a personal, professional and nautical standpoint the trip was a success. It added its quota to the scientific data of the region and helped pave the way for other explorers who followed.



## *A Palace Looted*

IN 1860, "CAP'N ED" Robinson of the Thomaston ship *Frank Flint* found himself in foreign waters—in Liverpool. England at that time was at war with China, the trouble growing out of the importation of opium into that country from India. The trade was profitable to British merchants, but the use of the drug was demoralizing the Chinese people and China wanted it stopped, and furthermore said it was going to be stopped. Smuggling, however, was carried on with the connivance of Chinese officials.

The opportunity for the incident that led to the break with China came from a chain of events which started a few years before in India. Native troops had been armed with Enfield rifles, the cartridges of which were wrapped in oiled paper. In order to load the rifles the top of the paper wrapper had to be bitten off. And, horror of horrors! the Hindus believed the oil to be the fat of the cow, an animal sacred to them, and to even put their lips to the top of the wrapper an act of sacrilege. The fanatical Mohammedans believed it to be the fat of the pig and for them to put the top of the wrapper to their mouths an act of pollution! Their personal interpretations were diametrically opposed; their reactions the same. The fat was in the fire—and mutiny the result.

England rushed to give India a spanking, and while her back was turned the Chinese took advantage of her preoccupation to seize an English opium smuggling vessel. That was an insult to the English flag and could not be condoned.

The English governor at Honk Kong, who was for his nationals right or wrong, ordered the bombardment of Canton, thereby bringing England into conflict with China which for ten years had been seething with a civil war known as the Taiping Rebellion.

Lord John Hay in command of H. M. S. *Odin*, and Charles George Gordon, later known as "Chinese" Gordon were dispatched to the Orient, but they needed help. In order to get reinforcements to them as quickly as possible every vessel lying in Liverpool harbor was commandeered to carry troops and supplies. It fell to Capt. Edward Robinson of Thomaston to carry cavalymen, their horses and provisions. The horses were quartered down between decks, as were cows, pigs, sheep, ducks and hens. When the horses stamped and neighed that was a signal for the cows to moo, the pigs to squeal, the sheep to bleat, the ducks to quack and the hens to cackle. Feeding time was like an early morning on the farm.

The voyage was a long one. As the Suez Canal had not then been constructed Capt. Robinson was obliged to sail around the Cape of Good Hope, across the Indian Ocean, through the Java Straits, and up the China Seas to Tientsin. Arrived there the quickly disembarked troops got immediately into the fray with their allies, the French. In order that Mrs. Robinson, a young woman of twenty-two, might view the battle she was strapped in an arm chair, hoisted and tied to a yard arm. The conflict was of short duration. The Chinese with their bow-guns were no match for the well-trained and well-equipped "foreign devils." As the name of the city, Tientsin, means "Heaven's Ford" and as Heaven wrought no miracle in behalf of her defenders, we must conclude that then as always it seems to be on the side of the heaviest battalions.

As soon as the smoke of battle cleared and it was safe for them to do so, the ladies from the various vessels were allowed under escort to visit the city. As they rode along on horseback they became objects of great curiosity to the awe-struck natives who had never before seen a white woman, had never seen any woman with unbound feet, and mistook their voluminous skirts for bird-cages. So bold and offensive did the natives become that they had to be driven off.

Tientsin, the port for Peking, capital of the empire, was a small city at that time and almost defenseless, the walled section being only three miles in circumference. Peking, on the other hand, was a city of walls within walls covering an area of twenty-



five square miles. Within the city was the "Imperial City" and in the heart of the "Imperial City" was the "Forbidden City" surrounded by massive pink-washed walls and a moat. Within the latter city were the royal palaces where lived the emperor Hien Fung, meaning "universal plenty," and his empress Tze Hsi, later known as the "Dowager Empress." By all the rules of oriental warfare Peking was a well fortified city, and it would naturally be supposed that its inhabitants would make some show of resistance; but, no, at the approach of the "foreign devils" the entire population of the proud, imperial city took to their heels or their 'rickshaws. Every one from the emperor and empress down to the lowliest coolie fled.

When the invaders entered the city it was like a city of the dead. Even the Grand Palace, "the Hall of Highest Peace" was deserted except for two Pekinese dogs, the special pets of the Empress. Pekinese dogs can be vicious, lion-hearted little creatures, but in no sense of the word can they be called watch dogs. Had they been, who was there to call? All the people had fled. So, so far as the dogs were concerned, the palace was looted without hindrance. In fact the dogs themselves were taken as a part of the loot by the commander of the expedition, Sir John Hay. It has been said that because of that unfortunate crisis in their canine careers the dogs had the distinction of becoming the pioneer Pekinese dogs in Pall Mall.

The palace was stripped of all its treasure, its beautiful hangings, exquisite porcelain, rich robes, lacquered tables, carved ivory—everything. All who had a part in the expedition shared in the division of the spoils. Cap'n Robinson brought his collection home to Thomaston.

The most valuable items Cap'n Robinson received were a gold lacquer table three feet across, the pedestal of which is surmounted by gold dragon's feet (now in the Knox Memorial at Thomaston) and richly embroidered robes adorned with gold buttons, the property of the Emperor and the Empress. Other articles consisted of a wonderfully inlaid rosewood cabinet (1500 pieces of inlay), a nest of four lacquer tea tables, two sets of lacquer trays, one in dark gold, one in dark red; a tea-caddy, with gold dragon's feet, gold lacquer writing desk, sewing box, and

glove box, tiny chess table, boxes of ebony, of sandalwood, and of ivory; an exquisite carved ivory basket, carved ivory brooch, steel mirror in a case, hand carved bamboo vases, gold and lacquer opium dish and many smaller items.

The vessel, the *Frank Flint*, had been built by Chapman, Flint & Co. and was owned jointly by that firm and Capt. Robinson. To Mrs. Flint, for whom the vessel was named, Capt. Robinson brought many bolts of silk which had been taken from the warehouse at Tientsin where were stored sample bolts of every pattern of silk manufactured in the empire. As long as he lived Charles R. Flint remembered the gift that came to him, then a boy of eleven or twelve, a Chinese bow-gun!

Would the reader like to know what became of the Emperor and Empress? Did they ever come back to their dismantled palace? The Emperor, no. He died the following year. The Empress, yes. As Dowager Empress and later as Empress she ruled in her own right until 1908. One of the greatest Chinese statesmen of all time, Li Hung Chang, was her chief adviser. It is interesting to recall that the same Charles George Gordon who had helped scare the Empress from her throne assisted in restoring her to it. As leader of the imperial army in 1864 he put down the long drawn out Taiping Rebellion which had been raging since 1850 in an effort to overthrow the Manchu dynasty, the dynasty in power. The Emperor was dead. Long live the Empress! And she did—for years and years and years, ruling vigorously and well, holding the reins of government so firmly and with such a show of wisdom that she came to be popularly referred to by her subjects as “old Buddah.” Yes, the British gave her back her throne. They had one of their own and didn’t need it. Neither the British nor the Americans ever gave her back her treasure. A part of it is still in Thomaston, a reminder of the days when Thomaston vessels were calling all ports and sailing all seas.



## *“Oregon George” Watts*

WHEN A NATIVE of Thomaston went to sea and came back full of sailor's yarns he could not stray far from the straight and narrow path of truth because there were so many others who had paralleled his adventures and could check up on his veracity. Giving due credit to personality in every given time and every place, their experiences had much in common. Shanghai was Shanghai, Bombay was Bombay, New “*Orleans*” was New “*Orleans*” no matter who went there. When a lad deserted his ship, however, and took to the interior, the story was different. Then was there an opportunity for tall stories that the hearer could not contradict unless the yarns were beyond the pale of all credulity.

While the world at large had its Baron Munchausen, Thomaston had its “Oregon George” Watts as a local yardstick by which all “whoppers” were measured. He was born in St. George in 1828, and was but twenty-one at the time of the great California Gold Rush in '49. Indications, however, lead one to suppose that he went overland to the West as numerous other young men from the vicinity did, but instead of following the horde to California he headed farther north into the wilds of Oregon.

He found Oregon a great untamed wilderness with broad rivers, looming rocks, gigantic forests, extensive plains, and an abundance of wild life. When he returned to his native heath he must have left many accomplishments in his wake for his name and his fame depend wholly upon the stupendous feats he brought to pass during his sojourn there.

One of the greatest handicaps to an explorer's progress in an unbroken wilderness is a mighty stream. Shallow streams can be forded, narrow ones can be swum, broad ones only bring the traveler to a standstill and challenge all his ingenuity before he is allowed to cross. To “Oregon George” it mattered not how

wide nor how deep the stream. His ingenuity made it possible for him to bridge the banks with material right at hand. Simply turning to the forest he cut down the tallest and straightest rubber trees he could find and with a mighty effort stretched them across the river, planked them and in next to no time a bridge was built that in imagination is standing to-day, a monument to unbeatable Yankee ingenuity.

Having once found the solution for overcoming the width and depth of a river, that problem bothered him no more. But when he saw a huge boulder looming up in the middle of a stream, the waters swirling by on both sides, he was momentarily puzzled. Was he to let a little thing like that stump him? Not for long. After stretching a rubber tree to the rock, he armed himself with a huge sledge and began hammering away to drive the rock down into the bed of the stream. He pounded and pounded away. His irresistible force had evidently at last encountered an immovable object. He was about ready to give up when he succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. The rock suddenly went down with a great gulp, drawing all the water in the river into the yawning chasm, making the building of a bridge unnecessary.

After the stupendous tasks of cutting down rubber trees and bridge building he thought he would like to settle down and enjoy a bit of ranch life. There were vast open prairies all about. All one had to do was to fence off a plot and the land was his. The only limit to the size of one's ranch was his ability to fence it. In fence-building as in bridge-building he was a past master. His ranch was enormous, for he could build so much fence in a day that it took him two days to walk back!

As with all explorers food was more or less of a problem. While there was an abundance of it at hand, it didn't exactly fall like manna from Heaven. A man had to make some exertion to get it. One day, feeling the need of venison, Watts went in search of a deer. He tracked him down, yet could not get a line on the creature because it kept running round and round a huge boulder. Determined not to give up the chase "Oregon George" bent the barrel of his gun, fired it, the shot circled the rock and brought down the elusive creature. Trust him to "bring home the venison."



There were other trees than rubber trees in the extensive forests of the region that was Oregon. Some of them were of truly enormous size. One day "Oregon George" and nine other men were trying to fell a forest giant. After working a day on one side of it and making no perceptible inroads on its huge trunk, they thought they would go around to the other side just to see how stupendous a task they had undertaken. When they reached the other side there were ten other men working there. Both crews had been chopping all day, neither aware of the other's presence. When the huge tree was finally felled ten chances to one it was likely to be stolen by the rival crew. "Oregon George" was delegated to guard it at night. The only way he knew how to protect it was to sleep on it. He mounted it, lay down and went to sleep, serene in the confidence that he had found a way to foil the bold thieves. To his great chagrin he awoke in the morning with nothing but the bark under him. The trunk had been filched as he slept!

Although rubber trees abounded in the rank growth of the Oregon countryside, strangely enough there was no sugarcane to be found there. Now, the pioneer takes his sweet tooth with him and the lack of sweets makes the craving prodigious. There were honey bees but bees worked only in the day time, consequently the supply was limited. If in some manner the bees could be induced to work at night the output could be doubled. "Oregon George" put on his thinking cap. He thought and he thought. One night he watched the myriads of fireflies disporting themselves about the countryside. Like a flash came the solution of his problem: cross the fireflies and the honey bees! No sooner said than done. From that day to this Oregon has been a land flowing with milk and honey thanks to the skill and ingenuity of "Oregon George" Watts.

While "Oregon George's" ingenuity was native he also gained inspiration from his observation of the conduct of Oregonian animal life. Teachers and philosophers are always sending us to the ant, the bee, or the spider for lessons in thrift, in industry, or patient perseverance. "Oregon George" noted all those and found them running true to form. It was in the native sheep that he discovered a trait for quick thinking that had never before

been ascribed to those meek creatures. One day when in the mountain fastnesses he observed a flock of sheep going round and round a mountain. The path kept growing narrower and narrower. It finally became so narrow that it was impossible for the leader to proceed. His flock was at his heels. There was not even room for him to turn around. Quicker than thought he turned himself inside out in reverse. In true ovine fashion the rest of the flock followed suit and they all went back!

Like the sheep, when the Oregon trail came to an end "Oregon George" turned about and retraced his steps to Thomaston where his memory of his experiences, like his shadow, never grew less.



## *The Prison*

AN OUTSTANDING feature of Thomaston, in it, but not of it, is the State Prison. It is located at the western end of the town and was built about a quarry that had been opened before Gen. Knox's day. For a time the inmates worked the quarry, but that work was early abandoned and the prisoners were set to making carriages and sleighs, harnesses, brooms and furniture. These were all made upon honor and earned a well-deserved reputation everywhere in New England. The paintshop, too, was famous for its fine product.

Thomaston was not exactly proud of the institution, yet it looked upon it as an interesting sideshow and its citizens visited it as regularly as they visited the cemetery. Being a state institution it was, under certain conditions, open to the public. Excursionists from all over the state came in droves at certain periods, usually in the fall, to inspect it, evidently anxious to see where people came when they were "sent to Thomaston." Townspeople made a practice of taking all out of town guests there for a tour of inspection or to attend the Sunday morning service. Neighbors could always tell when a certain retired sea captain had visitors because on such occasions he invariably started out with them bright and early of a Sunday morning headed for the prison.

The institution had no charm for small children in the town. Its forbidding white wall surmounted by a walk patrolled by an armed guard repelled them, and the occasional escape of some one of the inmates terrified them. Mothers used to try to reassure the youngsters by saying that no escaped prisoner would stay in Thomaston very long; but about dusk, when one was known to be at large, the timid hastened their footsteps and glanced over their shoulders to see if anyone looking like a "state's prison crime" was in pursuit of them as they scurried

along in the gathering darkness. Sometimes while sauntering home after school in the short days, some one would say, "What if a prisoner should be out!" and at the very suggestion all would take to their heels and make a bee line for home.

Everyone knew what the prisoners looked like, for the trusties in the regulation prison garb of half red and half black were a familiar sight about the prison yard and on the prison teams. Although those men seldom betrayed their trust, we knew there were others behind the bars who could not be trusted, who were always plotting and planning to get out. One man had been found sewed up in a top-buggy that was ready for shipment, another had made himself a suit, skirt, cape and cap out of carriage upholstery material, donned it when a party of excursionists were touring the prison and got as far as the guard room door before he was detected. These rumors of their art and cunning made the credulous the more ready to believe that any one of them might be working his way to freedom any minute.

For many years there was a prison inmate known as the "giant." He was of large stature, about six feet, seven inches tall and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. A local paper spoke of him as being of the "*cow order of humanity*, and not possessing much intellect." He was serving sentence for the brutal murder in Portland of a boon companion. He cut the body up, put it in his wagon, covered it with a quilt, and carted it about the city all day. He buried the remains after dark. These details were common knowledge, so when word went round that he had made his escape while gathering corn, children kept close to their mothers and fathers.

A boat in the river, cut loose from its moorings pointed to his avenue of escape. It was afterward learned he had cut the painter of the boat, paddled across the river with a broken board and made his escape into the Cushing woods where it was said that a Friendship woman passed him as she was going across lots to visit relatives. He made no attempt to molest the woman, apparently being anxious to escape notice. He managed in some way to get a hat and a pair of overalls, and thus disguised to get as far as Pem-aquid. After nine or ten days of wandering, he was captured, meekly submitting to his captors, and was returned to his old



cell. Thereupon everybody, especially the children, breathed easily once more.

Another bolder and more dangerous inmate made many unsuccessful attempts to escape, but was foiled every time. So vicious and malicious was he in his attempts that he brought upon himself as severe punishment as was ever meted to an inmate of the institution. His name was Samuel Haynes. He had been committed for the murder of a guard in the county jail where he was confined for some petty misdemeanor. He didn't intend to murder the man, simply to render him unconscious, but his victim died and Haynes found himself in prison for life. Sullen and unmanageable, he did everything he could to torment his jailors and studiously planned all sorts of daring escapes.

Once, in conspiracy with one of the Borden mutineers and several others, the most desperate men ever in the prison, Haynes cunningly laid plans to fight their way to freedom. When discovered he had a key to the guardroom door in his pocket and was armed with a pistol (thought to have been sent him in a chicken) and a loaded stick with which to kill the night guard. His companions were armed with dirk knives which they had managed to make in the blacksmith shop. They had all sawed the bars to their cells and were awaiting the final signal when they were discovered. Haynes, as their ringleader, was put in solitary confinement in the dog-hole where he was kept on hardtack and water until he was for the time being subdued.

Another time he threw pepper in an officer's eyes. In the struggle that ensued he was shot through the lung. After recovery he was again placed in solitary confinement in the dog-hole. He was considered so desperate a character and his offence so serious that he was kept there fourteen months. Imagine it, fourteen months in semi-darkness, sleeping on a bed of straw, with nothing but bread and water twice a day! On holidays only, the ban was lifted slightly and he was given the same fare as the others.

After fourteen months of such detention it was decided to give him another chance and he was put in the woodworking shop where he had previously been. He was a skilled workman, needing no supervision in that respect, but he liked to exercise his individuality by doing things just a little differently from the oth-

ers. The officer in charge, Mr. Blunt, was told to allow him no liberties whatever, not to be abusive, but to be firm. During his sentence in "solitary" the rules of the shop had been changed. Previous to that the men had been allowed some freedom, such as visiting each other's benches, moving about freely and talking. After several days of close application on his part Haynes ignored the new rules and deliberately crossed the room to speak to a fellow prisoner. The overseer called him to him and told him he thought he had had trouble enough; that he had tried insubordination and had suffered the consequences, adding "I want to treat you right and I will treat you right if you behave. Why don't you try to be a good man? You never can tell what might come of it." Angrily, Haynes returned to his bench. A few days later, without asking permission, he again left his bench, evidently starting for the overseer's platform. He was halted half way and asked what he was coming for. He said he had been thinking over what the overseer had said to him and wanted to speak with him. He said no one had ever before asked him to be a good man, and he had never thought it worth while to try, but he had decided to turn over a new leaf, voluntarily promising, "I will never give you any more trouble." He kept his word. Although a protestant he became a convert to Catholicism and studiously tried to make himself a model prisoner.

Haynes came of a fine family. His father went into the Northern army when "Sam" was a young boy, just at the time he needed a firm hand to guide him. His mother lost control of him and petty misdemeanors followed, coming to a climax in the murder of the jail watchman.

After thirty-eight years of imprisonment, the last few of which had been passed in a most exemplary manner, efforts were made to secure his pardon. A sister, who had held a responsible position in educational circles, had never given up hope of restoring him to an honorable place in society. She interested Henry Ford in him. Convinced of his earnest desire to reform, and assured of the promise of a position for him in the Ford automobile plant at Detroit, the pardoning board after much deliberation granted his pardon.

As soon as he was released he went to Detroit. After working



several years at a wage of five dollars a day, he managed to save enough money to start a picture-framing business of his own. Success awaited him and when, after a few years of this second independence, he died, he left a small estate, the result of his own thrift and industry.

At least once he returned to Thomaston and Rockland for a brief visit, staying at the Thorndike Hotel in Rockland and visiting Mr. Blunt, his former overseer, in Thomaston. He never lost an opportunity to show his gratitude to the man whose few kind words had proved the turning point in his career.

Two other prisoners had a less happy climax to their careers. They were Italians, who had murdered a fellow worker for the paltry sum of forty dollars. They were sentenced to hang and well does the author remember the day of execution. She can testify with Sarah Orne Jewett that "It is very solemn to sit waiting for the great events of life." From early morning we had been unable to fix our minds on anything else. Solemnity and pity gave way to awe as the hour drew nigh. The ringing of the prison bell, a sound to which we had been accustomed all our lives, suddenly became a requiem. In fact, so great an impression did it make on the author's mind that she has always thought of it as tolling. However, such was not the case. It was rung as on every other day, only earlier, that all the other convicts might be in their individual cells during the hour of execution. When the bell stopped ringing so still did everything suddenly become that it seemed as if a pall had settled over the town. So tense were we children that we were conscious of our breathing and heart beats. We knew the Bible taught "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but a life for a life, while it may have been just, was awful, in the true sense of the word. When the bell again rang for the resumption of the regular routine we knew that all was over and breathed a little easier.

Such executions were in the hands of the sheriff. He with his deputies, twelve witnesses, the prison physician, and a few others, possibly fifty in all, were the only ones who were allowed in sight of the gallows. After the attending physicians pronounced the victims dead, as there were no relatives to claim the bodies, they

were sent to the Maine Medical Society for dissection—a horrible thought!

In November of the same year there was a third execution. For some reason that hanging left no impression whatever on the author's mind. Perhaps she was becoming callous like Mme. Defarge who sat beside the guillotine in Paris just to see the heads roll off. So great a revulsion spread through the state, however, that two years later the death penalty was abolished.

The double hanging was not without precedent; for, ten years before, in 1875, two murderers by the names Gordon and Wagner had met a similar fate. In that instance, however, the criminals were "swinging" for separate crimes. Gordon had committed arson and an unusually ferocious triple murder up in Thorndike. Wagner was sentenced to die for an equally revolting crime on Smutty Nose, one of the Isles of Shoals. Both criminals were identified. Wagner, who had formerly boarded on Smutty Nose, was recognized by his intended victim, who managed to escape. Gordon was implicated by a five-year-old nephew, who said, "Uncle Johnny struck me with an axe, but I don't believe he meant to." However, both were convicted chiefly on circumstantial evidence. For some reason, perhaps because of the loneliness of the Isles of Shoals, the murder there aroused more widespread interest than the other crime.

The Isles of Shoals are ten miles off the New Hampshire coast. While Star and Appledore are in that state, Smutty Nose is within the jurisdiction of the Maine courts.

The Smutty Nose crime was committed in March 1873. Three women, alone in their cottage on the lonely little island, were attacked by a night intruder and two of them killed. The third managed to escape and hide in a snow bank at the water's edge. The accused was caught the following day and so conclusive was the evidence presented at his nine day trial that it took the jury only fifty-five minutes to bring in the verdict, "Guilty." To this day, however, there are "doubting Thomases," who question the justice of the sentence. The doubt is raised chiefly by the question, "Could any man row from Portsmouth out to Smutty Nose and back in the length of time for which the defendant could



give no alibi?" Many sailors and fishermen skilled in the handling of boats say, "No."

The statute books at that time plainly stated that a person guilty of murder within the bounds of the state should hang by the neck till he was dead—but not until after one year had elapsed and the death warrant had been signed by the governor. By making appeals for a change of verdict to life imprisonment, Wagner's counsel was able to stave off his execution for two years. Gordon's case was held in abeyance awaiting the outcome of Wagner's. Proponents of capital punishment kept up an agitation until finally Gov. Dingley signed the two warrants.

The victims, both in their early thirties, protested their innocence to the last. Gordon attempted to cheat the law by stabbing himself, but he was carried to the gallows bleeding and unconscious to meet his doom with his fellow prisoner, Wagner.

Following the execution, so strong was the reaction against capital punishment that the next year "Imprisonment for life" was substituted for it. Because of excitement over another murder in 1882 the death penalty was revived and remained on the statute books long enough to cover three executions in 1885, the double hanging in April and a single execution in November when Daniel Wilkinson was hanged for shooting a Bath policeman. In 1887 the penalty for murder was again changed to life imprisonment and still stands on the statute books.

A murder, whose creepy details the author will never forget, was committed in St. George in January 1878. The story must have been dramatically told and retold many times to have made such a lasting impression, for she was too young at the time to have any personal recollection of it. The victim was a woman, just like many in our own neighborhood, whose husband was away at sea. For several weeks her neighbors had noticed that her curtains were drawn, but presumed she was visiting relatives in a neighboring town as she sometimes did when alone. When she failed to appear after a reasonable lapse of time an investigation was made and the crime revealed. The murderer had concealed himself in the house one evening while she was out, and when she returned strangled her to death with the "cloud" she was wearing. It took no flight of the imagination whatever to place

one's self in the victim's shoes. The murderer was caught and sentenced to life imprisonment. To this day the author has no taste for murder or mystery stories regardless of the name on the title page or the manner of telling—the better, the worse. The story of that one crime gave her enough creeps to last a lifetime.

The early prison records were all lost in a comparatively recent fire, but a former official is authority for the statement that the longest single sentence in the institution extended over a period of fifty years. Because of repeated commitments, another confirmed criminal spent forty-eight years within its walls. That many unfortunates were repeaters is not to be wondered at when one recalls that at the time of which the author writes upon release a man was given a new suit of clothes and five dollars in cash. No matter how good his intentions, unless he had relatives or friends ready to harbor and assist him, he could not get far, nor for long honorably maintain himself while making his social readjustment.

Until comparatively recent times the prison was a co-penal institution, women as well as men being sentenced there. Whether the "female of the species" was more law abiding than the male or the courts were more lenient with the ladies it is hard to say, but it is a fact that there were never more than two or three of the "weaker sex" incarcerated within its walls at any one time. Without exception the ladies were all "lifers" who spent much of their spare time braiding rugs from the worn out red and black uniforms of their brother convicts. To-day women are not sent to Thomaston.

The late Rev. Charles Plummer, for a long time chaplain at the prison, used to chuckle over a promise made at a hearing before the governor's council. A group of women battling for their sex were determined there should be a separate institution for women. When told that the small number of women prisoners hardly warranted such an outlay one excited woman exclaimed, "You build the prison. We'll see that it's filled!"



## “Ed” Burgess, “A.B.”

THERE WERE three persons in Thomaston by the name of Edward O'Brien: the Honorable Edward, his son, Edward Ellis; and his nephew, Edward K., always called “E. K.” There were two ships built in Thomaston named *Edward O'Brien*, the “little Edward” and the “big Edward”; and then there was Edward O'Brien Burgess, not an O'Brien at all, but a namesake and an incarnation of all that was brightest and best in the O'Brien tradition.

Burgess, known to everybody as “Ed,” was the son of William Burgess of the firm of Burgess, O'Brien & Co., which operated lime kilns and ran a store where one could buy anything from saleratus or a paper of pins to a ton of coal or winter underwear! When, as a sailor lad Ed saw a sign in London which read, “We outfit you for anywhere, the Tropic heat or the Arctic cold” he felt a pang of homesickness, it was so reminiscent of his father's store back home.

In common with all the boys in Thomaston Ed had a great desire to go to sea. He saw boys by the dozens, boys by the score embark on vessels and sail around Brown's Point on their way to the open ocean and adventure. Not until he had finished high school, however, would his father and mother allow him to join the great throng that a-searoving would go.

His first venture was across the “pond” to Liverpool in 1879. He and two other Thomaston boys sailed on a vessel which loaded barrel kerosene at a dock in Weehawken, New Jersey. He was greatly impressed by the large fleet taking on similar cargo, and almost overwhelmed by the multitude of Jersey mosquitoes which came in delegations to welcome them. His first impression was that the mosquitoes were holding a convention, and that that

particular dock was their headquarters. Later he realized they were just a horde of blood thirsty pirates who welcomed anything or anybody giving promise of loot, and that if he wanted any blood left in his veins it was up to him to tack up netting, which he did without delay. He claimed the insects were so insistent that they helped push each other through the mesh of the screen cloth. That experience was of only short duration, however, for as soon as the vessel was loaded a tug came with the crew and towed them down the harbor to anchor.

While lying at anchor, a "Jim dandy" squall arose one night. The wind whistled, the masts creaked, and the sails thrashed and banged in the pitchy darkness. After awhile one of the top-sails "blew adrift," and Ed was sent forward to get out some of the men and tell them, "to jump there and make that sail fast." Since he was a "greenhorn" he was not sent aloft that time.

As soon as he got his sea-legs he found himself in the second watch where he got his initiation into the life of a sailor. His recollections are not all of hard work and strenuous days and nights. He saw many things that interested and enlightened him on that voyage and agreed with the southern mountaineer that "traveling does learn folks." To his great surprise and delight one morning he found that during the night they had entered the Gulf Stream. He immediately threw a bucket overboard to test its warmth. He had lived on the banks of the Georges and was therefore able to judge whether or not the water was warm. It was!

For many days they sailed through "miles of little glutinous bodies about the size of walnuts." Ed fancied them to be "whalefood" and then Mirable Dictu! one day somebody yelled, "There she blows!" My stars! wasn't he an excited boy? He caught sight of the whale just as it spouted and was in the lower rigging in a trice to get a better view. The whale was ahead of the vessel and when Ed got a glimpse of him by the foresail the leviathan gave a majestic wave of his tail and went down.

Then "Mother Carey's Chickens" were of much interest to him. He never tired of watching them. The sailors told him the birds carried their eggs under their wings, that the young were hatched there, and that sometimes vessels lost their jib-booms



by getting them entangled in the nests which hung from the sky! "Very smart little birds with a daub of white near the roots of their tail feathers."

The first sea that came tumbling aboard with a racket and a roar was most terrifying, causing him to fear that "the old packet" was surely gone. He was sure he would have taken to his heels had there been anywhere to go. Perhaps that is why sailors are so steadfast. They have to stand and take it.

He learned to help reef the foresail and to pay out the sheets to run before the gale, so the wind under the foresail might aid the vessel over the seas instead of plowing through them. While following such tactics they passed another vessel having the same difficulties. It was almost like watching one's self go by to see how she behaved. Some of the time she was completely out of sight, then she would roll into view so they could see all about her decks.

As they neared the coast of England, Eddystone Light and the Isle of Wight hove into sight, landmarks which Ed had eagerly awaited. In his diary he wrote: "Sunday, Sept. 28, Off the Isle of Wight; saw the famous Eddystone Light last night. Have the forenoon out. Have shaved, read, sewed, and so on. Beautiful day, fresh, fair wind, and the old girl is going, tending to business. Finally went on to the forecastle and counted the sails in sight, and what do you think? Counted seventy-three; all sorts, large steamers and small, sea going craft of all kinds, fishermen and pilot boats. Later, 4.30 P.M., counted again and found eighty-four in sight." Soon there came an English tug boat, a sidewheeler with no propeller. About midnight down went the anchor and they were told that at last they were in Gravesend Bay—in England!

Because the ship was laden with oil, it had to "lay" in the stream. On going ashore the crew were welcomed not by mosquitoes in search of blood, but by street urchins who clamored for a "bit of 'ard (plug tobacco) to put in our too-ooth, *just a bit!*"

With slight variations Ed's experiences were paralleled by that of every boy who made a similar crossing, but to each individual boy it was ever new and no second trip could compare with the first—never!

In the days when Thomaston ships were manned entirely by Thomaston men the “greenhorns” occasionally found a big brother in other members of the crew; that is, if they were likable chaps who tried to do what was required of them in the proper spirit. If, on the other hand, they were “mother’s darlings,” who expected favors they usually got all that was coming to them. Burgess, falling into the former category, made many interesting contacts and gained much valuable experience which enriched the whole of his long life.

After his first experience he naturally looked forward with pleasant anticipation or much foreboding to any prospective voyage, depending upon whether he knew the ship’s personnel. On one occasion, not knowing who was to be second mate of the vessel, the “*Martha McNeil*,” for which he had signed up, he indulged in mild apprehension as to what lay before him. Imagine, therefore, his pleasure and surprise when he boarded ship to find the berth was filled by “Mike” Donovan, a man he had seen about the streets and on the wharves in Thomaston for nearly as long as he could remember. While Ed knew Mike as a likable fellow, their contacts had been only casual, for Ed was a member of one of Thomaston’s “first families” while Mike was just Mike, a plebeian but warm-hearted Irishman. On shipboard, while the rank was reversed, both had the good sense to submerge family position in the new relationship, which Ed did without condescension and Mike without arrogance. In later years Burgess wrote, “Naturally everything was changed on board vessel, but he (Mike) was a fine man just the same, and I was in his watch the whole voyage.”

There were two Thomaston youths in the boy’s room. When it was fine weather, after they had got things “licked into shape” the boys and Donovan, during the dog watch, would stretch out on the main hatch and talk—and the yarns Mike could spin about Thomaston captains and ships! He was certainly a story book . . .

He told the boys he once got a berth aboard the *Pride of the Port*, just launched, and was going out to New Orleans. He was shipmate with two Thomaston boys and one from Rockland. One of the Thomaston boys had been working at the hotel in town



and the change from the *manavellins*, there, to the cracker hash, lobsouse, dandy funk, and such fodder that they had on ship-board was painful.

From New Orleans the *Pride of the Port* took a cargo of cotton for Liverpool. From Liverpool, she went to a port to load coal for Rangoon, and from Rangoon a cargo of rice for Boston where the ship was sold. Mike was paid off and came home.

Later Mike went out to San Francisco in the ship *Edward O'Brien*. One Sunday, as he and some others were ranging the streets, they came to a tent in front of which was a barker proclaiming that inside was a fine sight, and a chance to get a piece of advice they would never forget, and which might save them a lot of trouble—all for the modest sum of half a dollar. “What’s a half dollar among friends?” asked Mike, especially as all who came out looked satisfied and said it was worth the money.

Inside the tent they found a young woman seated on a platform, in one hand a knife and in the other a whittling stick. As she would take a fine keen shaving off she would say, “Always whittle away from you and you will never get cut; always whittle away from you and you will never get cut; always whittle away from you and you will never get cut.” Then they went outside and watched other suckers get caught.

From San Francisco the *O'Brien* took wheat to Cork for orders, being two hundred days on the passage. After going to Liverpool, she went to New York, where Mike was paid off and came home in a lime coaster. “Don’t think much of New York lime coasting,” said Mike.

One day soon after getting back, Mike was walking up Knox Street when Mrs. Captain John Dizer hailed him. She said her husband was out to the Islands—Callao—in the ship *Montpelier*; and asked Mike if he didn’t want to go out with her to help about the children? She assured him that Captain Dizer would take good care of him after they got there. “Anything for excitement,” said Mike, so, in a few days they were off.

Arrived at the islands they found the ship nearly loaded. Mike was given a third mate’s berth. They got off in short time, bound for Bremen with guano. Captain Warren Mills was mate. The packet was one of the “old wagons” and had hemp rigging. One

night shortly after they sailed one of her top gallant backstays carried away, and they had to put on some sort of a *preventer* to last till daylight. Then Mills told Mike to take a good man with him, haul the ends up into the cross-trees and put a French shroud knot in it. Mike had never heard of such a thing, but he kept that to himself, picked a man who looked as though he did know, to go with him, and the knot was tied to everybody's satisfaction. Asked what in time he would have done if the man had not known the trick, Mike said, 'I would have kicked him down out of the cross-trees in a hurry, wanting to know what in thunder he was doing aboard a fine American ship as an able bodied seaman, and not able to make such a thing as a French shroud knot.'

On the same voyage Mike, the story-teller, had in his watch a Spaniard who indiscreetly gave him a "bit of his lip" one night. At the time Mike took no notice of the insubordination because he was much the smaller of the two and not sure of the outcome if he tackled the man then and there. He decided to wait until the watch came aft and the wheel was relieved. Then, going to the fore-castle door he "sung" out for the fellow, who immediately responded, at the same time pulling his sheath and knife to the front of his belt. Mike grabbed him by the collar, choking and mopping up the deck with him so quickly that he had no time to use either his "lip" or his knife. "Boys," said Mike, "you've got to be quick in this business."

When the ship *Belle O'Brien* was new, Mike with another Thomaston fellow went out by the run to Mobile, intending to cheat the winter by staying there on the beach, working along-shore. He got along pretty well on the *Belle* with the officers, who were acquainted with him, but he said of all the thieves he ever saw, the sailors aboard the ship certainly had them beat a mile. One oldish man from Thomaston, who usually had a mate's berth on the three-masters out of Thomaston, was in the fore-castle. He was robbed of nearly everything he had. The man's wife had given him a great outfit, among other things a good supply of "boiled shirts," with his name on the tag of each. The thieves were so brazen that they wore the shirts right out in plain sight, not even bothering to take off the tags.



Mike and his chum found it exceedingly dull in Mobile, with the unions and so on, and finally shipped on a three-master to go out to Tampico Bay with a deckload of mules. It was a nasty voyage. The water for the mules was stored in hogsheads 'tween decks. As it took thirty or more strokes of the miserable little bung-pump to fill a bucket, and there was not room to put in a full stroke some of the twenty mules probably went thirsty. But all things have an end. The *Belle* went from Tampico to Demarara and loaded sugar for New York.

Once Mike found himself in Liverpool and was anxious to get home. He shipped with a prominent Thomaston captain who evidently knew a good man when he saw him. Just before docking, the captain called him into the cabin to settle up. As he counted out the money he asked if Mike had ever heard the saying, "Always speak well of the bridge that carried you safely over." Mike allowed he had. "All right" was the answer, and an extra five dollars was added to his pay envelope.

"Learned lots of things aboard that packet that I have pasted in my hat," said Burgess.

At another time on a voyage from New York, to London, to New Orleans there was an older man by the name of Sweetland, nicknamed "Sweetum," who was a great shipmate to Ed and the other boys. Although he was an "old salt with sea-legs" in one sense he was a novice, too, because it was his first experience on a square-rigger. Perhaps that fact gave him a common bond with the boys, the difference in age being offset by the inexperience and the resultant humiliation they shared in common. Similar grievances usually make for stronger binding qualities than do similar advantages.

Sweetum's first break was made one day when he was sent aloft to loose the main royal. As every armchair sailor knows, the royal yard is the second yard up on the top-gallant mast, and is therefore quite a long ways from home. As is customary when a man looses a sail, he staid aloft to overhaul the gear. Judging from the way it overhauled that it was fast to the deck, he hailed the officer to "Let go the main royal tripping line!" The shout of derision that went up! To those of us who do not know the difference between "tripping lines" and "buntlines," the error may

not seem consequential. Among seamen it was a major humiliation. Sweetum never outlived it.

It was Sweetum's job to furl the royals when they were taken in, and as the yards were thirty-four feet long and sail was never shortened for the fun of it, he had his hands full. With a sailor every finger is a hook and when Sweetum was aloft he made great use of his legs, turning his toes into hooks also.

It was mighty interesting for the boys to hear the mate give Sweetum instructions as to how the job should be done. It was a highly entertaining talkfest with all the talk being done from the deck—and all lost on Sweetum who couldn't hear, because the wind was making such a noise and he was so far from home. The mate was not profane at all—only on provocation. It was his pronunciation and enunciation that made the conversation extremely interesting to the rest of the crew.

On the return passage to New Orleans there was another man with about as much experience as Sweetum. This sailor had been shipped to take the place of one who had run off in London. He was given the job on the main royal and Sweetum went to the fore. It chanced one day that both royals were hauled up at the same time. The second man answered to the name of Philip, which the mate "rolled under his tongue" with many variations, making another great entertainment for the boys.

In London Sweetum was made watchman. As the vessel was loaded with kerosene oil she was not allowed in the docks but lay in the river, moored at the Deptford buoys, with lines out fore and aft. She was discharged into lighters. The lighters used chains instead of rope for making fast to prevent accidents. One night river thieves attempted to steal a lighter partly loaded with oil and fast alongside. How Sweetum did "holler," threatening to shoot! The thieves kept at work on the chain until the mate arrived when they sheered off. The tides run very swiftly in the Thames, and had rope been used in place of chains it would have been an easy matter for thieves to get the lighter out of reach before a boat could have been got overboard.

Sweetum had come aboard in New York an absolute teetotaler, having signed the pledge as a member of the Tenant's Harbor Reform Club. Upon his arrival in London he received a letter



from home informing him the club had been disbanded. Honorably freed from all his pledges he immediately went ashore and "embraced all the privileges thereby accorded him!"

As an illustration of the bad blood always existing between the mate and the steward, Burgess recalled the following incident. The "old wagon" on which he was an "A.B." was skipping along the southern coast of Cuba in a manner that would have made her owners rejoice could they have seen her. The men were having the "afternoon up" and all hands were busy scraping paint with their sheath knives. Everything was as quiet as Sunday when, down in the cabin, arose the greatest rumpus Burgess ever heard. Out of the pilot house or forward companionway came friend steward head first, followed by the mate who had thrown him out by the scruff of the neck and the seat of the pants. The steward was "yelling blue murder," and the mate was saying a few words and putting in an oath now and then for emphasis. Before the steward could get to his feet the mate was at him again. He jerked him along until he reached the break of the poop, where he applied his knee and away went the steward with a flying leap to the main deck. Jumping down the mate overtook the poor fellow and repeated the attack. The steward swore he would even up the score when the vessel arrived in New Orleans, but he was a "colored gentleman" who in New Orleans would be "just a nigger" so he prudently forgot the insults and made no attempt at retaliation.

Ed, who was brought up in a very religious family, was as much at home in the Baptist Church as in his own house, so it is not surprising that he should occasionally feel impelled to hum a hymn tune. When a whole watch got together in the fo'c'sle and sang Moody and Sankey hymns it was something to write home about. That actually happened on one occasion. According to Burgess's recollection, the night was cold, and the men had gathered in the fo'c'sle for warmth and companionship. Nearly every man was smoking and so was the lamp. The door was tightly closed. One could cut the air with a knife it was so heavy. Yet the men sang the old, old hymns with a gusto that would have delighted Billy Sunday himself.

Unlike the majority of Thomaston boys, the sea did not lay a

sufficiently strong spell upon Burgess to compel him to go on to the higher berths on shipboard. Perhaps it was the thought of the intervening steps that deterred him. One can scarcely picture him as a “hard-boiled” second or a “bloody” first mate. At any rate while he might have made an excellent captain, the roles of the first and second mate were most decidedly not in keeping with his temperament or his ambition. When he had had enough of the sea to convince him that was not the life for him he went ashore, and while he did not literally swallow the anchor he never afterward yielded to the call of the deep.

When the frigate *Constitution* was restored and was about to be towed from port to port as a stimulus to patriotism, a former ship captain suggested that he be allowed to save her from the humiliation of being towed by manning her with a crew of old sailors and sailing her as she was meant to sail. Recalling his boyhood experiences Burgess thrilled to the idea, his heart quickened a beat or two almost to the point of volunteering as an able-bodied seaman. When he thought of “battles that would have to be fought on jib-boom and top-gallant yards, in subduing the jibs and top-gallant sails” with a “bloody mate” on his heels, he remembered his years and his infirmities and sighed. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak.

He never became anything but a “packet rat” but he did not die a fool because he did see Liverpool.



## *Saved by a Dream*

CHARLES S. WATTS of South Thomaston told a harrowing story of the disaster which befell the ship *H. S. Gregory* of Thomaston. By the way, the *Gregory* was named for the doughty sea-cap'n, who as a boy, invented the hole in the doughnut.

"Early in January in the year 1882 my mother and I went by train from Thomaston to Philadelphia. I was ten at the time. There we met my father, Capt. Edward A. Watts, and took passage on the ship *H. S. Gregory* which sailed the 15th of January for New Tacoma, Washington. The *Gregory* was loaded with a general cargo, consisting mostly of railroad iron and crated parts of railroad passenger coaches. Just before leaving Philadelphia father bought mother a new organ for diversion during the long trip. I always took my school books with me. I distinctly remember the pleasure mother derived from playing the organ, and the regularity with which I appeared before my father twice a day for the recitation of my lessons. My father was a thorough instructor indeed in the three R's.

"We were one hundred and fifty days to Port Townsend, Washington. There we took a tug for New Tacoma, docking June the 17th, five months and two days after leaving Philadelphia. We discharged our cargo of railroad equipment and took on a cargo of wheat, 48,657 sacks of it. By the 17th of September the ship was ready for sea again, this time chartered for Queens-town, Ireland, where she was to take orders. The cabin boy left the ship at New Tacoma as did the first mate. The late James Gilcrest of St. George, who had been third mate going out, was promoted to the first mate's berth. Just before the pilot took leave of the captain he told him the *Gregory* would never reach her destination—a rather cheerful "so long."

"All went well until we were rounding Cape Horn. There



Top: Table from looted Chinese palace in Knox Memorial.  
Bottom: Old church on the Hill, built in 1796. Bell cast by Paul Revere.





Top: Schooner *C. S. Glidden* on stocks in Dunn and Elliot's shipyard in the 1890's. Note steam-box in the foreground. Bottom: Tombstone of Capt. George Jordan.



we met a hurricane. During the encounter the ship started some of her butts, causing a slow leak. She weathered the gale, however, and managed to hold her own until within six hundred miles of the Irish Coast. There she met her Waterloo.

"According to the log, that storm lasted thirteen days. You may know there was something doing with wind, rain, thunder and lightning playing around a lone ship in mid-ocean for that length of time. Under the terrific strain from the heavy seas without and the swelling grain within, the ship took in more water every day. In addition to swelling, the wheat also gave off a heavy steam which affected the men's eyes. The log says that the captain was blinded for two days before succor came.

"Day and night, as the storm increased, came orders (I can hear them now) "Man the pumps!" To add to the difficulty the wheat sifted from the sacks and clogged the pumps, making it necessary for the carpenter to go below to "sound" them. From his last trip he never returned. It is presumed he suffocated there in the ship's hold. After that father ordered a hole cut in the floor of the forward house, so the men could get at the sacks of wheat and throw them overboard to lighten the ship. That, too, was of no avail.

"During those thirteen days mother and I were locked in the after cabin. Shall I ever forget it? My mother, experienced in the ways of the sea, was terrified and I, face to face with disaster for the first time, was overwhelmed. When we both overheard the mate tell father that the ship was sinking, mother's mind became unbalanced. From that time on she continually talked to her canary and played the organ.

"On the eleventh day of the storm there came a ray of hope in the appearance on the horizon of a Dutch bark. Coming within hailing distance she offered to take us off, but father was not quite ready to give up the struggle, and declined the offer. The bark sailed away, leaving us to another night of terror and regrets. The following morning, however, when we saw the ocean around us dotted with floating kerosene barrels, some of which washed aboard of us only to wash off the other side, we were glad that father had said, "No, we will stay by the ship." The bark had been loaded with kerosene oil. The captain and mate in-



ferred at once that she had foundered in the night. It was later learned that her arrival was never reported. Father's "hunch" was right. We were safer aboard the sinking Gregory.

"On the thirteenth day the captain gave orders to take to the boats, but alas, during the night they had all been stove in. On that fateful day our predicament was this: ship sinking, boats unseaworthy, captain blind, his wife locked in the cabin with mind deranged, only five of the crew able to work!

"But that 'God works in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform' is shown by what happened that day. In the vicinity, but below the horizon, was another vessel, a British tramp steamer, the *Glenbervie* hailing from Sunderland, England, and commanded by a Capt. Dunn. She was carrying corn from Baltimore to Dublin and had run into the same weather that was bedeviling the Gregory. On the eleventh night of the gale the captain of the *Glenbervie* had a haunting dream. The following morning he told the mate he had dreamed if he changed his course two points he would come upon a big American ship in distress and would be able to rescue all on board. The mate told him to forget it as there was nothing in dreams. The following night the captain dreamed the dream again, whereupon he ordered the quartermaster to change his course two points. At three o'clock in the afternoon he sighted the *Gregory* and said to the mate, "There she is!" And sure enough, there she was, all but ready to go to the bottom.

"Owing to the high seas the rescue ship could not come alongside. Instead she came within half a mile to the leeward and called for volunteers to man her one life boat. All the others had been washed away. The second mate and six sailors responded to the call.

"Because the lifeboat could not come close to the sinking vessel the rescue had to be accomplished by means of a bo's'n's chair which was hoisted up to her yard arm. After the occupant was lashed into the chair, the yard arm was swung round and the chair was lowered into the life boat. During our rescue the officer in charge fell overboard and narrowly escaped drowning. The rule "women and children first" was observed. Mother, the first to go, can remember being tied in the chair, but has no fur-

ther recollection of the details of the rescue as her mind did not clear until the second day aboard the steamer. She is now in her ninety-second year and her mental powers haven't slipped since. My turn came next. The chair held only one at a time. Young people of today might call it a thrill, possibly enjoy it. I didn't. Because the captain was blinded he could not be the last to leave the ship. That honor was left to the mate, Mr. Gilcrest. Since there was no one to swing the chair for him he had to jump and swim for the life boat. He was a good swimmer and was able to accomplish it. The carpenter's body in the hold had to go with the ship. The pets and the beloved organ had to go, too. The only thing saved was the log-book. Father took that with him.

"The rescue began about 3:30 P.M. and at 6 we were all safely aboard the steamer, which stood by the abandoned ship until she went down about midnight. Capt. Dunn saw her take her final plunge, bow first. That was on the 16th of February, 1883. In four days the *Glenbervie* arrived in Dublin. We took passage on one of the channel boats to Liverpool. There we fell in with Capt. William Willey of Thomaston, commander of the Thomaston ship, *Alfred D. Snow*.

"It is interesting to recall that the second mate who effected our rescue received his reward. He was given a gold medal for his bravery and later became the commander of a large English liner. His picture, still in mother's possession, holds an honored place in our home. He looks good to us.

"During my adolescent years my father thought it would be easy to make a sailor of me, since I "had it in the blood." My father's father before him and my mother's father before her had both been seafaring men. Surely I was slated to be one, too. Was I dumb? Not exactly. Truth is, I didn't care for a 'life on the ocean wave.' I always attribute my choice of 'terra firma for me' to my experience during that ship wreck. I am sure that influenced me then and there to seek a livelihood elsewhere when old enough to make a choice. Mother continued to go to sea. With her it was different. She had cast her lot when she married father. With him she ploughed the ocean waves for forty years and more."



The *Alfred D. Snow*, the other Thomaston ship which was in Liverpool at the time of the Gregory disaster, met a similar fate five years later. The outcome was not so happy, however, for no one dreamed dreams and no one lived to tell the tale.

It is recorded of the *Snow* that she went the usual round of American ships during the Seventies and Eighties, namely, general cargo from New York or Boston to San Francisco, and grain from San Francisco to Europe or case oil to the Far East and then home either from the Philippines or the West Coast.

Capt. Willey, who "had a ship that could sail and he knew it," has been described by an old sailor as 'a very venturesome man . . . with one ambition . . . to make a passage; and that on the last voyage in 1888, eighty days after leaving "Frisco" for Liverpool with a cargo of wheat, "he piled her up on Dunmore Head, Ireland. Whether she carried sail recklessly on that final voyage will never be known, but an officer of the *J. B. Thomas* thought not. He was sure it was at least 140 days before the *Snow* came to grief in the path of a gale that "blazed its way across the British Isles." He was able to time it because the *Thomas* and the *Snow* were lying near each other in San Francisco harbor. They sailed about the same time, the *Thomas* for New York, the *Snow* for Liverpool. The *Thomas* made the passage to New York in 120 days, after which the officer of the *Thomas*, took a Cunarder for his home in Bristol, England, where he had been several days when the disaster to the *Snow* occurred. Crossing to Ireland he was able to identify several of the bodies that were washed ashore. Among them was that of the captain; of John Lermond, the ship's carpenter; and several others. Capt. Willey's body was brought home. The others were buried in Ireland.

## *A Sea of Pumice Stone*

A COMPARATIVELY recent magazine article entitled "The Loudest Noise on Earth" awoke a train of reminiscences in the mind of Eugene Henry, a Chicago railroad executive, formerly of Thomaston. The article vividly described the eruption of the volcano Krakatoa Aug. 6, 1883. After slumbering two hundred years, old "Thwart-the-Way," as she was called by sailors because that was her exact position across the Straits of Sunda, decided to bestir herself and in doing so made the great noise that startled folk as far away as Australia and the islands of the western Indian Ocean, covered the surface of the water with pumice stone, and sent a cloud of dust around the world to obscure the heavens for months to come.

Thomaston sailormen had a habit of being anywhere and everywhere when a major upheaval occurred. The eruption of Krakatoa was no exception to the rule. In his own words we will let Mr. Henry tell the facts:

"At that time I was rated as sailmaker on the good ship *Santa Clara*, owned by Chapman and Flint of New York, commanded by Capt. D. H. Rivers of Thomaston, my home. We were homeward bound from Manila to New York with a cargo of sugar. We had an uneventful voyage down through the Sulu Sea, *Celebes* Sea, Strait of Macassar, and Java Sea until we arrived off Batavia, where a Dutch gunboat hailed us and suggested we heave to for important information. The boat's crew was dispatched from the gunboat with the first lieutenant, who came aboard and gave Captain Rivers disturbing news, which was to the effect there had been a volcanic disturbance of the ocean bed of such terrific volume that whole islands had been destroyed, new reefs thrown up, and our charts of that area would not be dependable; extreme caution was necessary until we were well clear of Sunda



Strait. Thanking our informant, we braced around and dipping our ensign, got underway.

"The next day we rounded Anjer Point and came to anchor, expecting to secure a ration of fresh fruits and vegetables. What a change since I last saw the place! It had then been a town of 500 or 600 people; fifty or sixty bumboats had come alongside our ship with all sorts of stuff to catch "Poor Jack's" fancy. Now, not a building of any kind could be seen on the shoreline nor any signs of life. A single boatman came out to us and all he had was yams (a species of sweet potato). He said a tidal wave had destroyed the town of Anjer and all its inhabitants. His family happened to be up in the hills to escape the heat, he had gone to bring them home and on his return found death and desolation. He and his family were the only ones left.

"We hove up anchor and again started on our homeward way. It was the season of the favorable monsoon and with a spanking fair wind and smooth sea we glided rapidly through the Strait, much to our surprise seeing on our starboard hand two islands where there had been only one the last time we passed "Old Thwart-the-Way."

"About four bells in the middle watch (2:00 A.M. to the landsman) the lookout on the fore royal yard sang out 'breakers ahead!' I ran up on the upper topsailyard and, it being a beautiful moonlight night, then could see what apparently were waves breaking over something submerged, which seemed to extend a mile or more to the starboard.

"The *Santa Clara* was a three skysail yard ship. Everything was set and drawing well. She was not a fast sailer, but with a fine breeze and smooth water was making ten or eleven knots an hour. I expected to hear orders to shorten sail and heave to, but much to my ignorant astonishment Captain Rivers kept her right on her course and did not disturb a rope yarn. So along we sailed, the writer expecting soon to feel the shivering and shaking of the ship as she ran up on a reef, and see yards and spars come tumbling down as we went ashore. Nothing like this happened. We sailed into what looked like a sea of milk. As we entered it our way was checked to about four knots and

for two hours or more we cruised through masses of floating pumice stone.

“At daylight the pumice stone had broken into patches and frequently we could see bodies of men, women, children and animals amongst tree trunks and other flotsam of this terrible calamity of sea and air. For days thereafter until we came near Capetown, South Africa, we saw occasional patches of pumice on the sea. We scooped up enough of it when we first slowly sailed through that remarkable appearing sea to clean paint on the *Santa Clara* for the next ten years.

“At that time, in my humble capacity as sailmaker, I could not have questioned Captain Rivers at his taking chances of running the ship ashore, after the caution he had been given by the officer of the Holland gunboat. Years later when I had quit the sea I met him and did question him. He said his first impulse naturally, was to heave to, but when he recalled that it was a volcanic eruption that brought on the disaster he concluded the sea was covered by volcanic ashes, which, tossing around under the bright moonlight, looked like seas breaking. He did not want to waste an hour of his fair wind, and after carefully watching through his night glasses he saw some of the pumice stone roll over, so he decided he was right, and kept on. This is an illustration of how the Yankee skippers of the good days of the clippers made their fast passages—caution, combined with good judgment and quick decision.”



## More About Pitcairn

THE DAUGHTERS of Cap'n "Tom" Libbey have very distinct and pleasant recollections of a visit to Pitcairn. With their father and mother and a baby brother, who had joined the vessel in the North Pacific, they were aboard the ship *Edward O'Brien*, (the *big* Edward), bound from San Francisco to Liverpool. Wind and weather favoring, Capt. Libbey, like Capt. Mills, stopped at the island for fruit. The voyage was going to be a long one and a plentiful supply would be most welcome.

A boatload from the *O'Brien* put off for the island to make their wants known. So generously did the islanders respond that the more substantial varieties lasted the entire voyage. In return for the fruit the natives were given clothing and various sundries that they could get only from wayfaring vessels.

The Libbeys recall that every one on the island was either a ("Young" or a "Christian"; that the men's beards looked as though they had been cut with scissors instead of being shaved; that everybody went barefooted, and that young and old, "Young" and "Christian," were all dressed in a motley array of cast-off clothing. Yet, so completely were the people clothed with the garment of friendliness that unconventional combinations of bodily raiment seemed inconsequential.

The natives had a longboat they had salvaged from a wreck one hundred and fifty miles away. In that a number of them rowed out to the vessel for an exchange of hospitality. The visit over, the captain and his family stood on the deck to watch them make their departure. Dropping over the side, they took their places in the boat, and, as they bent to the oars, began to sing with great fervor "God be with You till we Meet Again." The sea was running high. The boat would disappear in the trough of a wave, the words would be lost; then, on the crest of the next

wave she would come into view and the words of the hymn come ringing over the waters. Every time she came up she seemed a bit smaller, the words of the song a bit fainter, until finally the voices died away altogether, lost in the restless surge of the sea.

In 1938 after the publication of Dr. Harry Shapiro's book, "The Heritage of the Bounty," correspondence took place between Mrs. William J. Tobey of Thomaston and Dr. Shapiro. Mrs. Tobey, when a young girl, visited the island twice in company with her father, who was the captain of a clipper ship. She wrote:

"No small boy reading *Treasure Island* for the first time was ever more thrilled than I with 'The Heritage of the Bounty,' for two reasons, first because it is delightfully written and second because I have visited Pitcairn Island twice before you were born, but too late for the redoubtable Mr. Hill to "give an arm" up that steep and slippery path where I was pushed, pulled and almost carried amid much laughter.

"My father was captain of a clipper ship built in Thomaston, and after I finished school I made two voyages with him round the Horn. On each homeward passage we spent a day at Pitcairn and met Simon Young, Rosalind, Eunice Jane Lawrence Young, Thursday October Christian, and many others.

"Russell McCoy was the Governor. He afterward went to England with Capt. Warren Mills of the ship *Harvey Mills*, another Thomaston ship. It was Capt. Mills who took the organ to them. Queen Victoria also sent them an organ; there was one in the church and one in the schoolhouse.

"For years afterward Rosalind Young and I corresponded, but her letters, alas, have 'gone with the wind.' I still have a bag she wove for me; a sea urchin once covered with purple, slate pencils, and a gourd with quite an intricate pattern traced on it. The *tapa* samples and the *leis* made of crimson immortelles have disappeared but I still have a cocoanut from which the milk was drained, the holes plugged and the shell polished.

"When we were there the population was as follows: 13 adult males, 19 adult females and 59 boys and girls, among them a pair of darling little twins, Rose and Lily. I don't remember their family name.



"The picture of the Christian house took me back to the day when the shutters of one of the windows were slid back and I leaned out and dripped pineapple juice all over the grass.

"They wanted us to eat something in every house we visited, and could not do enough to make us feel at home.

"A year or two later Rosalind wrote me that someone had named a baby for me (Caroline or Carrie Jordan).

"A year or more ago Lincoln Colcord started the Maine Marine Museum at Searsport and I was told by someone professing to know that the rudder of the *Bounty* had been purchased by a New York man and was to be given by him to the Museum.

"The first thing they asked for when they came aboard the ship was the last Moody and Sankey hymn book, and perfumery, both of which we were able to furnish and (I quote from a letter to my grandmother, which has survived) 'I gave them my linen suit, my brown silk dress, the one with the overskirt, and lots of other things.'

"You also mention the ship *Edward O'Brien*; she too was built in Thomaston, but before I was born.

"It seems to me everybody sang, the men and boys having really beautiful voices. When they brought us back to the ship we gave them a scene or two from 'Pinafore' but I think they preferred Moody and Sankey, though they liked the piano and wondered how I could make my fingers fly so fast.

"Please pardon this long letter from a garrulous old lady who has no one left with whom she can talk of Pitcairn Island. Again let me tell you how much I have enjoyed your book."

"Caroline J. Tobey

"Thomaston, Maine"

In response to Mrs. Tobey's letter came the following response:

"Dear Mrs. Tobey:

"It was a delight to receive your very kind letter, not only for the nice things you wrote about my book, but also because of your interesting recollections of Pitcairn.

"Of the names you mentioned Simon Young, Rosalind Young, Thursday October Christian and Russell McCoy, are all dead.

But Eunice Jane Lawrence Young is still living. And the little twins Rose and Lily are now grown up elderly ladies. Rose married Parkins Christian and is a grandmother.

"The other twin, Lily, married a Warren and is the mother of Burley Warren.

"I do remember a Carrie Jordan, but unfortunately my records are not accessible as I write, so I cannot verify the genealogy for you. I do, however, recollect that there was no one living by that name on Pitcairn at present.

"The anchor of the *Bounty* was dredged up several years ago, but as far as I know it was never purchased by any New York museum. The islanders were anxious to sell it and hoped to get a generous sum for it from some historical institution.

"Music has remained a favorite pastime of the islanders, and they still prefer hymns to secular tunes. Our collection of symphonic and light classical music hardly interested them at all. Indeed, when we left the island, the entire population came out in their boats and sang 'Shall We Meet by the Beautiful River.'

"Hary L. Shapiro

"American Museum"

\* \* \*

"Dear Mr. Shapiro:

"Thank you for your very interesting letter, telling me of the Pitcairn folk. It brought back things I have not thought of for many years.

"We had collected quantities of clothing, books, magazines, and sewing materials from San Francisco friends, or rather, they had been brought to the ship with the request that we give them to the islanders. On the 22nd day out, late in the afternoon, we sighted the island and caught the 'land smell.'

"At 5 the next morning I heard the mate speak to my father, and I went on deck to find we were close to the island and a boat was coming off. When she was within hail, a man shouted 'Good morning, Capt. J——! We have been looking for you. Capt. M—— told us you were coming.' The boat was loaded with fruit and vegetables and the Governor brought two huge bouquets, one for mother and one for me.

"After a hurried breakfast, we got into the boat and were soon



in Bounty Bay. I was carried ashore on the shoulders of two of the young men, but Father waded with the rest of them.

“Apparently everybody on the island knew all about us, for they all called me by my first name, and seemed to take a good deal of interest in hearing about the San Francisco people who had sent the organ. The oldest person on the island and the only one living of the second generation was Mrs. Mills. She was a very old woman, but greatly interested in us. We came back to the ship with quantities of fruit. The lemons were very thick skinned, much larger than ours and extremely acid. We brought pumpkin pie (not square ones) for our friends.

“Caroline J. Tobey”

## *Fire! Fire!*

FREQUENTLY THOMASTON was awakened in the middle of the night by the clangor of church bells rocking in their steeples and the shrill cry of "Fire! Fire!" There were several volunteer fire companies, one at the "Crick," one at the "Lower Corner," and one at the "Upper Corner." Although fires were not frequent enough to give the members much experience, the skill acquired during musters stood them in good stead. The town fathers had provided "*reservoys*," well-like reservoirs, at strategic points about town for use during such emergencies. As soon as was humanly possible after the alarm was given the firemen rolled the hand pumps out of the engine houses and raced to the scene. The nearest supply of water was tapped and in next to no time a stream was being played on the burning structure. Assistance, however, was not limited to the membership in a fire company. Anybody who felt like *singeing* his beard or risking his life was welcomed as a participant in the work of salvage. Because the owner was dependent upon such volunteer services he temporarily lost all authority as to who should or should not enter his domain. One time when fire threatened a home on the outskirts of the town kindly-intentioned neighbors tore open the bulkhead and rolled a barrel of soft soap up into the yard where it was accidentally spilled, making the ground so slippery it was almost impossible for anybody else to rescue a single thing.

If the burning building was too far from an adequate water supply it frequently burned to the ground. In the winter of 1850 there was a disastrous fire at the prison. Much damage occurred because in addition to a scant supply of water, the engine valves were found to be frozen. The shrieks of the inmates added to the horror of the scene, and to the alarm of the townspeople.



Although the woodwork in the cell block and the guard house were destroyed the officials managed to remove the prisoners to another part of the enclosure without the loss of a single man. As a result of that fire the state purchased what was then called a powerful engine, "State of Maine, No. 3" specifically to protect the prison property, but since it was manned by citizens, the town was privileged to use it when occasion demanded as an auxiliary to its own fire-fighting equipment.

The appearance of the prison engine and the parade of the company in charge of it the Fourth of July following, together with the presentation of a beautiful silken banner embroidered by the ladies, so aroused the envy of the young swains at the "Lower Corner that they induced the town to spend \$1200 for an "elegant" engine to be housed and manned by citizens in that part of the town. Their "tub" was named "Eureka, No. 4." Cyrus Eaton says in his "Annals of Thomaston," "These two companies, by trials of power of the two 'tubs,' their appearance on public parades, their dances, and picnics, have, since their formation, contributed much towards the entertainment of its citizens, as well as having been of great service on several occasions of fires." What more could one ask of any company of firemen?

Once when the author was a child an alarm was rung at three different times for as many fires which a demented old lady set in various parts of her home. The fires all occurred on a Sunday and a Sunday night. It was so far away that the author's mother would not allow her to go at the time, but Monday, after school, with a party of school children she went down to the house. With the others she deliberately walked in, went up stairs, and looked for all the places where the fires had been set. The last attempt having been made to fire a feather-bed which was tucked away in a closet, we hunted around until we found the closet and with our own eyes saw the charred places in the feather-bed. As we went in and again as we came out, the old lady's husband, who was *not* demented, swore volubly and expressively. We were terribly shocked by his profanity and wondered what made him so crabbed. Surely we hadn't done anything. We hadn't set the fires. Why should he swear at us?

So great was the enthusiasm for fire-fighting that at one time a junior fire company was organized. Warden Rice of the prison provided the members with helmets, belts and badges and one of the senior companies donated an "old tub." After a little drilling the boys could hardly wait for an alarm to ring. If a fire had not providentially started in the house just north of the Burgess and O'Brien store, the boys might have been tempted to set one just for the satisfaction of putting it out.

In response to the alarm the senior companies arrived first and were fighting the fire valiantly where it obviously was—in the main part of the house. Since that part of the house was receiving all the attention it needed, the boys, who were underfoot, were driven off. They went out back, climbed the roof of the ell and began to chop a hole in it so they could play a stream into the interior. Hearing the commotion the excited owner rushed out back to see what was going on. When he saw the boys on the roof he asked them what they were doing up there. "Putting out the fire!" came down the enthusiastic response. "Can you see any fire there?" was the next question. Putting his hand on the roof, the leader shouted back, "No, we can't see it, but we can feel it!" Turning to his comrades he called, "Play away boys!" They had enlisted as firemen and would save the owner's house in spite of him.



## *An Underseas Rendezvous*

IN 1884 A THREE-MASTED schooner of 414 tons slid down the ways in Thomaston. She was built upon honor as were all the vessels of the Dunn & Elliot fleet, and as a seal of approval had the name of a little girl emblazoned across the stern. If there were any clouds on the horizon on her launching day certainly none of them were war clouds and by all the law of averages, the *Hattie Dunn* should have run a modest career and paid regular dividends until Davy Jones cried, "Time's up!" The *Dunn* did go quietly about her business for thirty years and so sturdily had she stood up to wind and weather that she gave fair promise of riding the waves for many years to come. Then on May 23, 1918, there came a shot that was literally "heard round the world." "American Vessel *Hattie Dunn* Sunk by German Submarine!" "American Vessel *Hattie Dunn* Sunk by German Submarine!" was radioed round the globe and made the headlines of newspapers everywhere. The Germans had brought the war to our very doorstep!

Although the sinking came as a shock and was so unexpected, it was just what everybody had hinted at in spite of the daily reassuring broadcast, "No submarine. No war warning." The people had known right along that there was a devilish German submarine lurking in every cove and creek on our eastern seaboard, and now perhaps the cynical would believe it.

In the course of her career the *Hattie Dunn* had had several masters. Her last master whose name will be forever linked with hers was Capt. Charles E. Holbrook of Tenants Harbor, St. George, Me. who was also part owner. The vessel was not equipped with a radio, but before leaving New York the captain had received assurances, as had all other coastwise shippers, that the coast was clear. Had he not received such assurances he probably would have put to sea just the same, for his livelihood

depended upon his enterprise and seamen must work though submarines be lurking.

The craft was in ballast, so, though its master might be taking a chance, there was no cargo for the greedy Germans to seize or to destroy. Two days out when about thirty-five miles off the Jersey coast and everything was "going as fine as Sunday" a submarine was sighted about half a mile off the port side. Capt. Holbrook thought nothing of it since he was practically within home waters. Even when the first shot came whizzing across his bow he did not suspect what he was in for. He presumed it to be an American sub at target practice and was preparing to dodge out when a second shot was fired under his bow. By that time he began to sense the full import of the encounter and started to run away, but shrapnel tearing through the rigging told him the jig was up. Firing at closer range as she came half-submerged through the water the submarine soon overhauled the schooner. In perfectly plain English the commander shouted to Capt. Holbrook, "What are you trying to do, Captain? Are you trying to get killed?" By that time there was no question as to the submarine's nationality and the *Hattie Dunn* hove to.

A gang from the submarine boarded the vessel whose crew was given ten minutes to gather their personal belongings. The raiders did not lose a minute. While the trembling crew were cramming their possessions into their duffle bags, the Huns helped themselves to the ship's papers and its chronometer, ripped open the forward hatch, planted a bomb in the hold on the port side and hung another on the outside. Captain and crew were then ordered into their own life boat, a fully armed German jumped in with them and told them as they valued their lives to row for the submarine.

In the meantime the "sub" had gone in pursuit of another victim, the *Hauppage*, a new schooner just off the ways. She, too, was in ballast bound to Portland, Maine. Like the *Hattie Dunn* she tried to run away, but the Huns had her number, too, and she was forced to submit to capture. After watching the race from the deck of the *Hattie Dunn*, the Germans went over her side into their own boat, quickly catching up with their victims. When about three hundred yards away, there came a terrific



explosion. The *Hattie Dunn* shuddered and went down bow first. For a few minutes, not more than fifteen or twenty, the spanker defiantly refused to give up, then, drawing the water into a great eddy as though pulling her shroud about her, the schooner disappeared beneath the waves, a sickening sight to the bewildered captain to whom she had been a second home. When the boats came alongside the submarine as directed, the *Hauppage* had met her fate. She was lying on her beam ends with a gaping hole in her starboard side.

Almost as soon as the prisoners were taken aboard the submarine another victim was bagged. She was the three masted schooner *Edna*, Capt. Charles Gilmore of Tenants Harbor, bound from Philadelphia to Santiago. The panic-stricken Negro crew managed to snatch a few personal belongings and take to the boats. The *Edna's* precious cargo of oil and gasoline made her a particularly rich prize, a cause of great rejoicing to the enemy. By the time the third prize was taken the submarine was so crowded that if any more St. George captains had insisted on changing their quarters for hers she would have been obliged to hang out a sign "Standing room only." Besides, she had been cruising around for some time and if she hoped to carry on her "good work" it was time to make a dive for safety. Submerging every time she sighted a craft the sub managed to worm her way into the very channel of Delaware Bay! Will you believe it now? Wasn't there a submarine in every "crick" and cove of the Atlantic seaboard?

The Germans, who had been on this side of the water for about a month, had shaved their heads and allowed their beards to grow, so they looked like bearded sculpins or other strange creatures who would not only be ready to let blood, but willing to drink it, too. Capt. Holbrook had many secret misgivings when he was clamped in the air tight compartment of the U-boat, but his captors told him that although they had sent his vessel to the bottom they harbored no personal designs against him. This dubious comfort was temporarily so reassuring that soon the victim could truthfully recite the couplet,

"With shaking hands and trembling knees,  
Apart from these I'm quite at ease."

He was allowed to sleep, or, try to sleep, in the commander's bunk. He was awarded the honors of his rank by invitation to eat at the first table in company with the august commander, the electrical engineer, the assistant engineer, and the navigating officer. The menu consisted of canned sardines, canned cheese, canned blood with scraps of meat in it, black bread, hot cocoa every day at four and, as a pious gesture, potatoes on Sunday! The men, under sharp surveillance, were occasionally allowed to exercise on deck. The *Hattie Dunn's* boats had been lashed there, but were soon washed away by the frequent submergings. With them went all hope of escape.

One day, finding the captain sighing disconsolately over pictures of his wife and his home in Tenants Harbor, the German commander reassured him that he might reasonably hope to see them again as he was planning, as soon as it could be done with absolute safety to the raider, to set all the captives adrift in open boats, with the promise of no molestation as they rowed for the shore. That assurance coupled with the natural curiosity of any navigator for so novel an experience made the eight-day detention a thrilling experience.

According to German orders the submarine in question, the *U-Boat 151*, had been manned by dare-devils who were expected to take risks, to come back with their submarine if they could; if not, to go down with it. They certainly took risks, daringly riding the waves or cunningly gliding beneath them right under the keels of some of our proudest ships.

One whole day was spent on the sea floor off *Chincoteague* Inlet while repairs were being made to the sub's engine. Capt. Holbrook says, "Ships propellers could be heard overhead, ships no doubt scouting for that very sub. It was pleasant to know that friends were only a couple of hundred feet away, but not pleasant to think what might happen if discovered and a depth bomb dropped on it."

Another day they hauled up and submerged in 180 ft. of water to give the electrical machinery an overhauling. The engineers were efficient, but self-contained automatics some times refuse to function and it was appalling to think what might happen if the men accidentally put the machinery out of gear. Capt.



Holbrook had ridden on the waves for many years. He had gone to sea ever since he was a boy of fourteen. Many times he had felt that all the elements were working against him, then again he had the assurance that they were all working with him, and the universe on anyone's side is surely a working majority. But there, cooped up in that small cubby-hole with no help from the outside world to draw upon, it was almost too much to ask of any man that he have blind faith in those guttural-tongued, hairy-faced creatures, who were so obviously working in defiance of all the laws of nature and of grace.

One night was spent on the surface right in sight of the glow of lights from Broadway. The crew was angling for the Atlantic cable. They had been equipped with grappling shears and had received orders to cut any and all cables that they could locate. For three days they kept up their stealthy quest. Finally satisfied that they had done a neat piece of work they headed for Nantucket. They learned afterward that they had cut two cables—one to South America and one to Europe.

Off Nantucket they ran into nasty weather. They had hoped to make a sortie into the Boston shipping lane and to visit the Maine coast, but their captives dissuaded them from doing that, convincing them that at that season they would be greatly hampered by fog. They then backtracked to the Jersey coast where they hoped to find brighter weather and better pickings.

They succeeded almost beyond their expectations, chalking up six vessels in one day, the second day of June, a Sunday. Did anyone say, "The better the day, the better the deed?" Certainly not the masters of the three sailing vessels, the *Isabel Wiley*, the *Jacob B. Haskell* or the *Edward H. Cole*. Neither did it come from the bridge of the steamers *Texel*, *Winnecome*, or *Caroline*. They were all boarded and sunk in quick succession. Since the U-boat could accommodate no more captives the crews were ordered to take to their boats and look out for themselves.

The capture of the *Winnecome* made it possible for the captors to unload their captives. Four life boats were brought along side and twenty-three men distributed among them. Each boat was generously given a can of water and considerately directed to the

Jersey Coast. They were sixty-five miles from shore, with nothing but their strong arms to depend upon and nothing but the sun and the north star to steer by. For twenty-two hours they bent their backs to the oars. The boats were small and the sea choppy. Some water was shipped, but on the whole the men experienced no unusual hardship or danger greater than many of them had experienced before.

They were picked up by the S. S. *San Sabà* bound for New York. The captain of the steamer notified the Coast Guard which sent the *Amphitrite* to take the men off. Landed in New York, the captains were taken to Naval headquarters where they willingly subjected themselves to a long questioning. Later Capt. Holbrook was called to Washington for an interview with Admiral Benson.

The *Hattie Dunn* cost \$40,000. Her owners were reimbursed with interest some years later. If "All's fair in love and war" perhaps the Germans may think that that settled the score. Such is not the case. Wounds may heal, but haunting, disfiguring scars remain as a symbol of the hatred and the strife which forever divide men's hearts.

The U-boat, what became of that? She lurked in the vicinity long enough to destroy twenty-seven craft of 72,000 tons. Twenty-three were sunk by T.N.T. or by bombs, and four by mines laid by the submarine. The operations were carried on close to the shore between the Virginia capes and Fire Island. The sub lingered long enough to learn with great satisfaction the extent of her ravages and to glory in the fact that her presence was causing so much panic along our entire eastern seaboard.

Panic and uncertainty are as much a part of war psychology as direct military or naval accomplishment, so the U-boat lurked in our waters until they became too hot for her, then she sneaked home as slyly as she had come. But until the Armistice was signed, sane and sober folk by the thousands testified to "seein' things" in absurdly shallow waters and in most out-of-the-way places. While fears should ordinarily be regarded as psychological U-boats, preying upon of the argosies of the mind, there was some justification for fear of submarines at that time. Including



*U-Boat 151*, six German undersea craft were in American waters during the summer and fall of 1918 and a seventh was on her way when the Armistice was signed. They were a comparatively new naval weapon. Because of that fact and because we had no technique for grappling with them they struck terror to the hearts of our people out of all proportion to their number.

## *A Yankee at the Court of "The Lion of Judah"*

IN 1885 IN THE TOWN of Warren, in a house not far from Oyster River, there was born a lad whose name during the Italian occupation and conquest of Ethiopia, was destined to make the headlines in newspapers all over the world. His name was Everett Andrews Colson. His mother dying soon after his birth, he was brought up by an adoring grandmother and aunt. So much coddling and attention did the motherless child receive that it is a wonder he ever grew up, let alone have any initiative.

He was a quiet, shy child never able to attend school regularly because of minor illnesses. Being naturally studious he lost little due to his forced absences, because at home he pored over his books until he could read them upside down as well as right side up. He was not given to mischief, but the author remembers hearing his grandmother tell how he kept her out of her pantry for several hours once upon a time. A certain drawer in the pantry when pulled out automatically fastened the door. Availing himself of that protection and deaf to his grandmother's entreaties, he climbed all over the pantry shelves and investigated everything to his heart's content. He held the fort until the masculine members of the family came home to dinner and forced the pantry window.

Later he was to use similar tactics when Anthony Eden and other eminent Britishers, in the vain hope of appeasing Mussolini, tried to prevent him from taking a seat as Haile Selassie's representative in the League of Nations. Doggedly holding his own he was finally granted the privilege of sitting in that august body, the first and only American to be accorded the honor.

When his grandmother's home was broken up by her death, Everett went to live with his father. At an early age he studied



stenography, typewriting and other commercial subjects. Passing civil service examinations with high honors he received an appointment, while still in his teens, to the government civil service department in the Philippine Islands. After a few years there he was made a United States marshal in Canton, China, but was recalled to the Philippines to become head of the civil service.

During the first World War he served overseas as an auditor in the American Expeditionary force where he gained experience in financial matters which led to another government appointment. In 1915 the Republic of Haiti had asked the United States for aid in establishing a stable government. An American financial adviser was named to hold the infant republic's purse strings and in 1920, after his return from overseas, Colson was appointed assistant holder of the strings, which position he held several years.

Scotch blood was racing through Everett's veins. His father was Scotch and had the reputation of being "very close." On his mother's side, he was a direct descendant of the frugal Scotch-Irish settlers who came to the Georges in 1736. Not all of them tied wisps of hay to the tongues of their cow-bells at night to prevent needless wear and tear, or whipped honey bees from their cornstalks to prevent the loss of saccharine matter, as one of their neighbors did; but they were a canny lot who knew the worth of a penny—and what is equally important, that one hundred pennies make a dollar. If Everett was thrifty, he came honestly by it both by inheritance and example.

When this Georges River lad was six there was born on the other side of the world, in Ethiopia, a prince, a cub of the "Lion of Judah." The prince, a grand nephew of *Menelek II*, then on the throne, was named *Tafari Makonnen*. Like the little Knox County boy he was quiet and shy and very studious. At the age of seven he began the study of French under French tutors. Later he attended a French missionary school. He thus early became imbued with occidental ideas and began to dream dreams of what he would do for the advancement of his people when it came his turn to rule over them.

The momentous day came in 1928. In that year the young prince was crowned and proclaimed "The Conquering Lion of

the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia." Although Menelek had done a good job of unifying the country for a time, some recalcitrant tribesmen gave the new ruler scant recognition. One of their chief objections to him was that he was not a typical Ethiopian warrior. Another objection was that he was bent on reforming them. What is more annoying to an old dog than to have somebody, especially a young upstart, insist on teaching him new tricks? Notwithstanding the various objections Tafari was proclaimed emperor in 1930. With the reins securely in his hands it looked as though Ethiopia might be in a fair way to enjoy many years of national well-being and take her place in the world family of nations.

Now, although the word "Ethiopia" means "burned face," the true Ethiopians are not *negroid*. Ethnologists agree they are of Hamitic-Semitic origin. They, themselves, claim with great pride that they are Aryans and descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba! It will be remembered that the Queen did make a visit to that famous king. The Bible says Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Evidently Sheba's Queen was "one in a thousand."

When Tafari was crowned he took the name, "Haile Selassie," which means "Power of the Trinity." A sympathetic American when told of it remarked, "He will need all that and more, too!" Although a lineal descendant of Solomon, Selassie made no pretensions to great wisdom. Instead, he was humble withal and taking the advice of his famous ancestor that, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise" he called in "wise men" from Europe and America to give him "a wise and understanding heart." Among those wise men, some say the one on whom he relied most was none other than Everett Andrews Colson, the lad from the Georges now grown to be an expert in international law and finance.

Haile Selassie had something to sell—the idea that he and his people were entitled to a place in the sun. He also had something to buy—the favor of the other nations who were bent on overshadowing him and his simple subjects. Although he, himself, was a buyer of no mean capacity he found a staunch ally in the shy and taciturn Yankee of Scotch descent whom he had called



to sit at his council table. The author has heard it said that, in the business world, people of the Semitic race make the best salesmen and that Scotsmen, because of their shrewdness in buying, the best buyers. If that be true, then, it would seem that there in Ethiopia was an unbeatable team. It might have been so but for European colonial ambitions, European "diplomacy," and craven "appeasement."

To be sure, Haile Selassie was the legal heir to his throne. He had inherited it from his great-uncle, Menelek; but with it he also inherited his great-uncle's adversaries. Menelek had given the Italians a great drubbing at Adowa in 1896 and had sent them out of the country, "kit and kaboodle." Forty years went by. A new generation of Italians had grown up to whom "Adowa" was little more than a name, but Mussolini, empire-bent, looking around for an ache or a pain to exploit and not finding one, opened up the old wound and began to bawl like an injured child, "It hurts! I can feel it now!"

For five years Haile Selassie and his advisers had been trying to weld the empire together. They had pacified the recalcitrant chiefs. They had introduced electricity, films, the radio; were improving the roads and educational facilities and were really making perceptible progress in lifting the tribes out of a state of barbarism to semi-civilization when the "civilized" Italians descended upon them with tanks, guns, airplanes and poison gas! The natives were about as capable of meeting the onslaught as a lion-hearted kitten is capable of facing a lion.

Working shoulder to shoulder, sometimes for twenty hours a day, Selassie and Colson with their other advisers tried feverishly to stave off their impending doom. Appeals to England and France were of no avail. The League of Nations, of which Ethiopia had been a member since 1923, did not lift a finger.

An Associated Press dispatch of the day stated: "Throughout the present crisis Colson has been constantly at his employer's elbow, guiding the Imperial hand. Most of Selassie's speeches, radio broadcasts and state papers have been prepared with Colson's advice . . . It is Colson who is generally accredited with having inspired the well-balanced, restrained policy of the Emperor in not provoking Italy during the mounting crisis and also

calming the fiery tribal chiefs who are clamoring for action to repel the threatening advance of the Italian army. Colson's is a mammoth job. In addition to assisting in the solution of the many vexing problems growing out of the Italian colonial expansion campaign, and dealing with intricate matters of finance affecting the mobilization and maintenance of field armies to defend Ethiopia in case of invasion, Colson grapples with a myriad other problems including the supervision of general government revenue."

Life at so high an altitude as that at *Addis Ababa* had weakened Colson's heart. Doctors advised him to seek a lower level, but he remained steadfastly at his post. Then, one day when on an important mission by plane, the plane was suddenly forced to a high altitude by an Italian plane and Colson was so severely stricken that he had to obey his doctor's orders and seek a lower level, leaving Haile Selassie and the others to carry on without him.

By May, 1936, it became evident that *Addis Ababa*, the capital, could no longer be defended. Haile Selassie, who had been gassed, fled with his wife and family aboard a British vessel for Alexandria. The capital fell May 5th, and on May 9th Mussolini proclaimed King Emanuel III of Italy, Emperor of Ethiopia!

The battle over, neither Colson nor Selassie ceased to fight. Colson, leaving a sick bed, appeared at Geneva with the Emperor to make a last stand for a seemingly lost cause. It was then, that, in spite of Anthony Eden and other powerful advocates of appeasement, he succeeded in taking a seat in the League of Nations as a representative of Ethiopia.

Disregarding Eden's warning that he would "compromise his imperial dignity if he did so," Haile Selassie—"the righteous are bold as a lion"—made a personal plea to the League against the dropping of sanctions, in which he said, "apart from the Kingdom of the Lord, there is not on earth any nation superior to any other," and asked, "are the States going to set up a terrible precedent of bowing before force?", adding, "It is international morality which is at stake!" The sanctions were dropped. Ethiopia was finished!

Haile Selassie and his family were allowed to seek asylum in



England. Colson came back to America where he passed away in a Washington hospital Feb. 23, 1937. The former Emperor asked a personal representative to attend the funeral and lay a wreath on Colson's grave. In his message of sympathy to Mrs. Colson, he said, of Colson "Broken by the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, he continued to serve the cause of right and justice until his strength was exhausted and his life was sacrificed."

In 1937 it seemed as if the word "Finis" had been written at the close of the volume, "Ethiopia." In 1941 Haile Selassie was back in Ethiopia hoping to rebuild his empire on the old foundation laid down by him and his advisers. In his heart is the prayer of the Psalmist, "establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it." In the words of Menelek: "Ethiopia . . . she stretches out her hand to God."

## “Never Spoken”

BY AN INTERCHANGE of signals, sailing vessels on the high seas always “spoke” each other. Each told her name, the name of her master, character of her cargo, ports of departure and destination, and any additional information which either wanted to know or in which either might have a vital concern. The most resplendent clipper in shining paint and with snowy sails did not disdain to “speak” the dirtiest “tramp” afloat, nor was offense taken if the “tramp” spoke first. The clipper even “spoke” smoke-belching steamers which, in the eyes of the wind-jammer crew, was the last word in condescension. So momentous were those chance meetings that years after almost any member of the crew, though he might be unable to recall where he had put his cap five minutes before, could, without blinking, relate as did the skipper of the *Monsoon* that “it was the Danish barque *Margaret* they had passed in the afternoon watch on the 4th of April, 1898, that she had sprung a leak on the starboard waterline three feet below the *Plimsoll* line, that she was carrying that-and-that sail, that the chronometer lost two seconds a week, that the wind was three points aft . . . and that the master’s name was Olsen.” Such encounters were always recorded in the ship’s log and reported upon arrival. “Last spoken” or “never spoken” were ominous words indeed.

From the earliest days every newspaper on the American seaboard carried a column of “Marine News.” In the *Daily Eastern Argus* of Portland, Maine, dated Dec. 17, 1838, one reads under

### Spoken

Nov. 15, on Bahama Banks, Brig *Vincent*, Thomaston for New Orleans.



In another issue of the same paper dated Aug. 4, 1841,

### Spoken

July 30th, lat. 22.20, long. 62, barque *Emma Isadora*, Hallet, fm. Boston for Smyrna.

June 28th, lat. 40, long. 48, brig *Franklin*, Handy, from N. York for Bilboa and Bordeaux.

July 13, was seen an American brig, showing a white flag with a red square block in it.

July 19, lat. 34.38, lon. 41, barque *Shylock*, 8 mos. from Wiscassett, 380 bbls. oil (so reported).

As the records show, at sea every craft “spoke” every other craft. Not one disdained to “speak” another because it did not “like the cut of its jib.”

Ashore it was different. Thomaston was an aristocratic town. Everybody knew everybody, but not everybody spoke to everybody. Oh! no! One did not speak to a person to whom he had not been introduced though he met him on the street day after day, year in and year out. The story is told of a man who bore the names of two of the oldest families in town. Returning home unexpectedly one day he found his wife in the embrace of a stranger! Shocked and grieved, the husband turned and went out to complain to his friends and neighbors. Naturally they asked, “What did you do?” “What did you say?” To which the man answered with great show of spirit, “What did I say? I didn’t say anything. I had never had an introduction!” That was an extreme case to be sure, but it serves to show how deeply inbred was Thomastonian conventionality.

Although “Lady” Knox, the social arbiter of her day, had set an example of haughty aloofness, it was doubtless quarter-deck formality that was responsible for the prevailing custom. A ship-master who could not speak to a sailor lad on his own ship though he lived next door to him when at home, certainly could not be expected to speak to him when he met him on the streets or at the wharves in Thomaston. And since, as a rule, women are haughtier than men, a master’s wife could not be expected to condescend to speak to the wives and daughters of those of a rank

lower than her husband's unless she had excellent reasons for doing so.

There is a quatrain which runs somewhat as follows:

"He, thinking me to flout,  
Drew a circle to keep me out;  
But I had the wit to win,  
I drew a circle which took him in!"

The author of those lines never could have lived in a proud New England seaport. He could not have done that in Salem, in Wiscassett, or in Thomaston!

In defense of their caste system the Hindu's have a proverb, "If you be a Queen and I be a Queen who will bang the butter?" Indeed! who would? In Thomaston, if everybody had spoken to everybody else, who would have had the distinction of not speaking to somebody else? Nobody. The best part of the custom was that, since an introduction is a reciprocal affair, the rule worked both ways. If a woman "so proud you could not touch her with a ten foot pole" disdained, when on the street, to speak to the store clerk with whom she had dealings over the counter the clerk did not feel snubbed—neither had she had an introduction. It was just as broad as it was long.

One had to show his social position or his "I am just as good as you" attitude in some way other than by dress and manner of living. For the parties concerned to completely ignore each other was the simple solution. In a town the size of Thomaston where everybody, behind his back, was called by his given name such a rule was almost a necessity if even a semblance of personal dignity was to be preserved. A local teacher who had cited a certain man as a "dignified" person was asked a few days later by one of her pupils, "What was it you said *ailed* Mr. So-and-So?" Thomastonians were proud and dignified. That is what ailed them.

Society, with a capital S was made up of small and exclusive cliques. Such groups were inviolate. Everybody knew his place. Nobody dreamed of crashing the gates as is sometimes done in the most exclusive circles to-day.



The deep-water sea captains, the shipbuilders, the bankers, the ministers and professional men and their families constituted the "first families." Everybody else was beyond the pale, some a greater distance than others, but all outside the charmed circle.

In Thomaston's heyday when a man became master of a deep-water craft, not a coaster, he and his good wife automatically became members of the elect. In many instances the wife was the daughter of a captain and needed no grooming for her new position. If she were not to the after cabin born she soon "learned the ropes" and acquired a sophistication all her own. Prosperity gave her pride. Travel widened her outlook. Varied social contacts gave her confidence. Many were relatives or childhood friends of Mrs. Grace, the wife of William R. Grace of "Casa Grace," Peru. Grace did not have the distinction of being or of having been a master mariner, but he had had the good judgment to marry the daughter of one and he was making his way as the master of Peru. The Chapmans, the Flints, the Snows, and the Burgesses, all members of Thomaston's shipbuilding and seafaring families who had migrated to New York where they were prominent in shipping circles, kept open house there for their many Thomaston friends as did the *Gillchrests* in London and Liverpool. Nor were the seafaring folk limited socially to their relatives and old acquaintances. Wherever they went a sailing, whether to China, Japan, Calcutta, Australia, or the Mediterranean they made social contacts of a worthwhile order which added a bit to the luster of their lives and the aura of their personalities.

Every sea cap'n with his Prince Albert, his silk waist coat, his high hat, his gold tooth pick, and his heavy gold chain seemed the very personification of authority, the incarnation of a command. Every sea cap'n's wife "rigged out" in her silks, satins, and velvets, adorned with heavy ear rings, and wearing a large cameo on her firm bosom presented a picture of proud and dignified femininity not unlike that of the female figurehead which held such a conspicuous place under the ship's bow. The very bearing of the captain and his wife discouraged familiarity. It would have taken courage of a high order for one not their

peer to even dream of "speaking" either of them. It was such dignified men and women, their children, and their children's children who gave Thomaston a reputation for pride and a social atmosphere in keeping with the queenliness of her ships.



## *Vessels Built in Thomaston*

	Tons		Tons
1787	(Name unknown)	1809	Ship Holofernes ..... 500
178-	Experiment		Bristol Trader .....
179-	Little Sally		Sch. Oliver ..... 80
	Arthur		Industry ..... 115
1795	Sloop, Olive	1810	Brig William Henry .. 197
	Sch. Betsy & Jenny ... 90	1811	Elder Snow ..... 135
	Friendship		Catherine ..... 175
	Sloop, unknown name		Sch. Unknown
1796	Sch. Jane ..... 100	1815	Jane ..... 80
	Friendship		Mary Spear ..... 98
1797	Sch. Sally ..... 95		Four Brothers ..... 60
1798	Slp. Miriam ..... 80	1816	Catherine ..... 105
	Unknown		Lavinia ..... 88
	Sch. Columbus	1817	Thomas ..... 72
	Rebecca		Milo ..... 80
1799	Slp. Dolphin		Dodge Healey ..... 80
1803	Richard ..... 80		Three Brothers ..... 80
	Sch. Hannah & Polly .. 104	1818	Slp. Shelburn ..... 47
	Montpelier ..... 110		Sch. John Gilman .... 66
	Unknown		Halsey ..... 146
1804	Wessaweskeag ..... 100	1819	Slp. Seven Brothers .. 73
	Brig Quantabacook ... 140		Alfred ..... 75
	Ship (Unknown) ..... 200		Sch. George ..... 100
1804?	Dolphin		Ann ..... 134
1805	Slp. Quicklime ..... 93		Nancy ..... 138
1805?	Sch. Increase		Brig Adams ..... 139
	Ship Unknown	1820	Sylvester Healey ... 143
1806	Slp. Hannah ..... 56		Slp. Mary Snow ..... 45
1807	Polly ..... 99	1821	Lucy Healey ..... 86
	Fair Play ..... 70		Brig Belvidere ..... 167
	Asa ..... 80		John ..... 144
1808	Sch. Aurora .....		Shawmut ..... 151
1808?	Good Intent ..... 74		Sch. John .....

	Tons		Tons
1822	Brig Scio . . . . . 165		Brig Moscow . . . . . 222
	Iddo . . . . . 197		Sch. Martha . . . . . 125
1823	Montpelier . . . . . 199		Volant . . . . . 87
	Sch. Leo . . . . . 89		Bradford . . . . . 121
	Francis . . . . . 83	1829	Brig Pensacola . . . . . 232
1824	Brig Dodge Healey . . . 200		Sch. Miner . . . . . 73
	Mark . . . . . 158		Thomaston . . . . .
	Ship Georges . . . . . 319		Enterprise . . . . . 74
	Sch. Lafayette . . . . . 103		Cashier . . . . . 102
	Charles . . . . . 65		Slp. Two Friends . . . . . 35
1825	Brig Knott . . . . . 174		Franklin . . . . . 61
	Brandywine . . . . . 179	1830	Brig Sherer . . . . . 144
	Mary Cole . . . . . 174		Sch. Alfred . . . . . 74
	Sch. Mary Thomas . . . 75		Romp . . . . . 77
	Georges . . . . . 72		Dime . . . . . 95
	Lincoln . . . . . 127		Slp. Mary Snow . . . . . 54
	George . . . . . 65		Ann Sarah . . . . . 85
	Mary Ann . . . . . 75	1831	Sch. Hope . . . . . 22
1826	Brig Brutus . . . . . 186		Industry . . . . . 48
	Belvidere . . . . . 182		Freeman . . . . . 106
	William . . . . . 170		Gen. Wayne . . . . . 137
	Eliza . . . . . 129		New Sally . . . . . 65
	Mechanic . . . . . 218		Mary . . . . . 92
	Sch. John & Nancy . . . 110		Bt. Juno . . . . . 13
	Michael . . . . . 81	1832	Ship Brunette . . . . . 333
	Denny McCobb . . . . . 100		Brig Arria . . . . . 136
	Margaret . . . . . 72		Mary Kimball . . . . . 159
1827	Ship Hewes . . . . . 298		Sch. Emeline . . . . . 115
	Brig Pulaski . . . . . 235		Wm. Henry . . . . . 105
	Jos. Sprague . . . . . 183		Richmond . . . . . 98
	Sch. New York . . . . . 126	1833	Brig Com. Tucker . . . . 185
	Thomas . . . . . 85		Paragon . . . . . 241
	Atlantic . . . . . 100		Zealand . . . . . 189
	Wm. Harris . . . . . 133		Snow . . . . . 198
	John . . . . . 102		Sch. Fair Play . . . . . 116
	Gen. Jackson . . . . . 108		Tremont . . . . . 120
	Peggy Thomas . . . . . 108		Orion . . . . . 49
	Maria . . . . . 133		Vincent . . . . . 148
	Slp. Hannah & Clarissa . 56	1834	Minerva . . . . . 100
	Bt. John . . . . . 21		Olive Branch . . . . . 21
1828	Ship Majestic . . . . . 297		Ariadne . . . . . 51



	Tons		Tons
	Curlew . . . . . 76	1841	Sch. Sabine . . . . . 164
	Solidres . . . . . 83		Brig Homer . . . . . 199
	Brig Majestic . . . . . 156		Pantheon . . . . . 196
	Julia & Helen . . . . . 193		Brk. Weskeag . . . . . 248
	Raymond . . . . . 205		Washington . . . . . 186
1835	Sch. Effort . . . . . 78		Mandarin . . . . . 275
	Gen. Knox . . . . . 149		Baltic . . . . . 302
	Brig Zoroaster . . . . . 159		Teazer . . . . . 249
	Lincoln . . . . . 130		Mallory . . . . . 300
	Ship Peruvian . . . . . 476	1842	Sch. Alexander . . . . . 144
1836	Sch. Dav. R. Kalloch . . 129		Lightfoot . . . . . 149
	Richard Taylor . . . . 121		Wilder . . . . . 122
	Molaeska . . . . . 152		Brig Susan Spofford . . 199
	Corvo . . . . . 128		Atakapas . . . . . 149
	D. B. Keeler . . . . . 128		Saline . . . . . 199
	Candidus . . . . . 396		Brk. Epervier . . . . . 264
1837	Sch. Shakespear . . . . . 126	1843	Sch. John Frederic . . . 102
	Brig Voltaire . . . . . 144		John Kendall . . . . . 169
1838	Sch. Hero . . . . . 100		Swallow . . . . . 157
	Challenge . . . . . 95		Brig Chinchilla . . . . . 139
	George & James . . . . 54		Brk. Louisiana . . . . . 249
	Potomac . . . . . 128		Ship Alvum . . . . . 364
	John Spofford . . . . . 100		Charlemagne . . . . . 742
	Brig Lime Rock . . . . . 174	1844	Sch. Willow . . . . . 100
	Ship Tyrone . . . . . 538		New York . . . . . 133
	Talleyrand . . . . . 549		Brig Rowland . . . . . 230
1839	Sch. Glide . . . . . 38		Maine . . . . . 222
	Nancy Hewett . . . . . 69		Marsellois . . . . . 220
	Extio . . . . . 149		Mary Jane . . . . . 148
	Brig Francis P. Beck . . 249		Four Brothers . . . . . 199
	Carleton . . . . . 249		Kimball . . . . . 182
	Growler . . . . . 247		Ship Medora . . . . . 400
	Brk. Chas. William . . . 298	1845	Sch. Gulnare . . . . . 150
	Ship European . . . . . 593		Peru . . . . . 88
1840	Sch. Mars Hill . . . . . 25		Lydia & Mary . . . . . 29
	Iowa . . . . . 149		Avenger . . . . . 105
	Edinburg . . . . . 195		Lucy White . . . . . 94
	Oneco . . . . . 198		Mary George . . . . . 148
	Puritan . . . . . 229		Leprelet . . . . . 100
	Loretto . . . . . 241		Adelaide . . . . . 116
	Brk. Suwarro . . . . . 292		

		Tons			Tons
	Queen Pomare	95		Brig John Kendall	180
	Mary Langdon	100		Azores	274
	Floreo	120		Highlander	206
	Francis Colley	167		Tartar	199
1845	Brig Annawon	147		Amulet	199
	Joseph	178		Swan	231
	Almira	194		Elizabeth Watts	225
	Alida	234		Matinic	192
	Hamlet	219		Lucy Spear	202
	Martha Sanger	188		H. Kalloch	217
	Achland	194		Brk. Marmion	358
	Kedron	200		Star	298
	Patrick Henry	148		Catherine	316
	Brk. Algoma	293		Robert Walsh	282
	Alvarado	299		Ship Walter R. Jones	400
1846	Sch. Eagle	98		Nisida Stewart	565
	Linnell	144	1848	Sch. Sarah Lewis	172
	Santiago	99		Anita Damon	137
	Niaga	122		Brig Bryant	177
	Isaac Achorn	98		Denmark	219
	Bengal	97		Rainbow	248
	Pawtucket	100		Brk. California	310
	Brig Reveille	183		Theoxena	398
	Florence	175		Ship Pyramid	741
	Irving	236		John Hancock	746
	Monterey	200		Str. Gold Hunter	23
	Susan Ingraham	176	1849	Brk. S. H. Waterman	480
	Benj. Litchfield	190		Ithona	315
	Pulaski	249		Ship Ionian	749
	H. R. Hyler	242		S. Carack	874
1846	Brk. Georges	267	1850	Brig Frederick Eugene	126
	Leopard	263		Brk. Culloma	360
	John Stroud	268		Ship James Nesmith	991
	Mary Kendall	274		Vancluse	699
	Miltiades	447	1851	Sch. Marcelia	142
	Ship Thorndike	399		Clipper Bk. Racehound	506
1847	Slp. Peace	69		Ship Rochambeau	866
	Sch. Melbourne	132		Wm. Stetson	1146
	Thomas Hix	126	1852	Slp. Gen. Washington	43
	Bengal	97		Brig. Caroline	221
	Sea-Gull	124		Brk. Linden	440



	Tons		Tons
	Ship Hyperion . . . . . 838	1859	Sch. Nautilus . . . . . 136
1853	Slp. Nevis . . . . . 58		Litchfield Brothers . . 1136
	Ship Oracle . . . . . 1200		Ship Eagle . . . . . 1448
	Ocean Chief . . . . . 1229		Montebello . . . . . 1050
	Germanicus . . . . . 1167		Spiridion . . . . . 1149
	Juventa . . . . . 1187	1860	Sch. Gen. Knox . . . . . 219
	Mulhouse . . . . . 1130		Ship St. Mark . . . . . 1448
	L. Gilchrist . . . . . 1198		Col. Adams . . . . . 1314
	Alice Counce . . . . . 1157		E. Creighton . . . . . 1286
1854	Brig George Albert . . . 241	1861	Gunboat Kennebec . . .
	Ship Sebastian Cabot . 1336	1862	Brk. Seabird . . . . . 535
	Baden . . . . . 1200		Ship Gen. McLellan . 1349
	S. Curling . . . . . 1468		or 1596
	R. Robinson . . . . . 1458	1863	Brk. Sunbeam . . . . . 654
1855	Brig Austins . . . . . 292		Glen Avon . . . . . 718
	C. F. O'Brien . . . . . 283		Ship Edward O'Brien . 1552
	Almira . . . . . 194		Gen. Berry . . . . . 1197
	Brk. Mary Bentley . . . 396		Oracle . . . . . 1196
	Nineveh . . . . . 439		Ne Plus Ultra . . . . . 1396
	Ship J. F. Chapman . . 1035		E Pluribus Unum . . 1370
	Leona . . . . . 1149	1864	Sch. Seventy-Six . . . . . 234
	R. Jacobs . . . . . 1122		Carrie Melvin . . . . . 275
	Jas. R. Keeler . . . . . 1292		Ella . . . . . 94
	Samuel Watts . . . . . 1249		Cattawanch . . . . . 148
	Vesper . . . . . 1497		Brk. Singapore . . . . . 751
1856	Brig Lovana . . . . . 339		Fighting Joe . . . . . 587
	Brk. Livorno . . . . . 456	1865	Ship Corsica . . . . . 1337
1856	Ship Barnabas Webb . 1342		Henry L. Richard-
	Jos. Gilchrist . . . . . 1444		son . . . . . 1623
	J. Morton . . . . . 1149		Brk. Pactolus . . . . . 1201
	Wm. Singer . . . . . 1049	1866	Ship Andrew W. John-
	Marquette . . . . . 1199		son . . . . . 2005
	Aldanah . . . . . 1048		L. B. Gilchrest . . . . . 1157
	Mary O'Brien . . . . . 1297		St. Charles . . . . . 1766
	James Colley . . . . . 1175		Pride of the Port . . 1183
1857	Ship Bolina . . . . . 1199		Joseph Fish . . . . . 1262
	S. Emerson Smith . . 1260		Sch. Veto . . . . . 91
	Holy-Rood . . . . . 1048		James Young . . . . . 261
	Frank Flint . . . . . 1193		William Slater . . . . . 221
1858	Ship Joseph Fish . . . . 1199	1867	Sch. D. B. Everett . . . 199
	Mary E. Campbell . . 1374		Abbie Dunn . . . . . 279

	Tons		Tons	
	Nettie Cushing . . . .	91	land . . . . .	546
	Sch. Cora & Etta . . . .	230	1873 Sch. Lizzie Heyer . . . .	360
	Addie Fuller . . . . .	217	Grace Bradley . . . . .	530
	Carrie Walker . . . .	173	Cathie C. Berry . . . .	319
	Ship William Camp-		Etta M. Watts . . . .	365
	bell . . . . .	1538	Etta M. Barter . . . .	272
	Kendrick Fish . . . .	1326	Brigadier . . . . .	310
1868	Sch. Lizzie Carr . . . .	286	M. E. Downer . . . .	379
	Ship Ventus . . . . .	1242	F. L. Richardson . . .	401
	Jane Fish . . . . .	1493	Lizzie Bell . . . . .	65
	Brk. Nicholas Thayer .	584	May McFarland . . . .	456
	Martha McNeil . . . .	1010	1874 Sch. Thomas R. Pills-	
1869	Ship John Bryce . . . .	1968	bury. . . . .	414 or 527
	Sch. Louisa Bliss . . . .	429	Maggie M. Rivers . .	281
	Georgie B. McFar-		Melissa A. Willey . .	425
	land . . . . .	267	Grace Andrews . . . .	568
	Abbie L. Butler . . . .	269	Joseph Spinney . . . .	1989
	Aldona Rokes . . . .	294	Joseph Souther . . . .	381
	William McLoon . . .	65	1874 Sch. Almeda Willey . .	547
	Brk. Kate Harding . . .	714	Cassie Jameson . . . .	399
	Ship Loretta Fish . . . .	1944	Etta M. Stimpson . .	314
	John Bryce . . . . .	1968	Ship Alida . . . . .	1671
1870	Sch. Ada F. Whitney . .	312	(Abner I. Benyon—	
	Albert D. Henderson	300	name changed to	
	Chas. F. Heyer . . . .	323	Alfred Watts . . . .	2044
	Jennie F. Willey . . .	364	Brk. Levanta . . . . .	395
	Brk. Fannie J. McLel-		Joseph S. Spinney . .	1989
	lan . . . . .	1951	1875 Sch. C. W. Lewis . . . .	322
	Ship Alex McCallum .	1951	Brk. Minnie M.	
	Samuel Watts . . . . .	2034	Watts . . . . .	1023
1871	Sch. Annie Bliss . . . .	334	Ship Belle O'Brien . .	1903
	Effie J. Simmons . . .	214	H. S. Gregory . . . .	2020
	James A. Potter . . . .	348	John T. Berry . . . .	1296
	Ship Eliza McNeil . . .	1583	1876 Sch. J. A. Levensaler . .	21
1872	Sch. Ella Pressey . . . .	165	Ship Harvey Mills . . . .	2187
	Amos Walker . . . . .	364	1877 Ship Levi G. Burgess .	1616
	Hattie Turner . . . . .	295	Alex Gibson . . . . .	2194
	Lizzie Wilson . . . . .	319	Alfred D. Snow . . . .	1951
	Mary A. Powers . . . .	497	Baring Brothers . . . .	2166
	Silver Spray . . . . .	124	1878 Ship Frank Curling . .	2200
	Bktine. Hattie McFar-		Col. Adams . . . . .	1516



	Tons		Tons
	Snow & Burgess . . . .1655	1890	Sch. Charles L. Daven-
1879	Ship J. B. Walker . . . .2178		port . . . . . 980
1880	Sch. Mary Sprague . . . 650		D. H. Rivers . . . . .1019
	Bktine. Freeda A. Wil-		Sedgwick . . . . . 605
	ley . . . . . 534		Henry J. Smith . . . .1108
1881	Sch. Lizzie B. Willey . 574		Sadie C. Sumner . . . 672
	Nelson Bartlett . . . . 670		Carrie T. Balano . . . 474
	Ship Gen. Knox . . . .2141		Susie M. Plummer . . 908
	or 1587		Benj. C. Frith . . . . . 888
	Bktine. Levi S. Andrews 669	1891	Sch. Martha T.
	J. B. Thomas . . . . .1938		Thomas . . . . . 750
1882	Sch. Jennie Lockwood 433		Bessie E. Creighton . 612
	S. Gerry . . . . .443		Ella M. Willey . . . . 841
	Eliza Levensaler . . . 164	1892	Sch. Harry T. Hay-
	Carrie Strong . . . . . 450		wood . . . . .1203
	Mary A. Killeran . . . 413	1893	Sch. Cora Hanson . . . 525
	Ella Elliot . . . . . 419	1894	Sch. C. S. Glidden . . .1057
	Helen L. Martin . . . 423	1895	Sch. Henry Lippett . . . 895
	Ship Edward O'Brien .2157	1896	Sch. R. W. Hopkins . . 935
	Cyrus Wakefield . . .2013	1898	Sch. C. S. Glidden,
1883	Sch. Lizzie Chadwick . . 449		2nd . . . . .1098
	Nellie A. Drury . . . . 460		John C. Haynes . . . .1198
	Horace O. Bright . . 647	1899	Sch. Mary T. Quimby .1047
	Elbridge Souther . . . 658		Lizzie J. Parker . . . .1250
	Emily J. Watts . . . . 439	1900	Sch. Thomas S. Denni-
	Ship R. D. Rice . . . . .2134		son . . . . .1329
1884	Sch. Henry Souther . . . 680		Republic . . . . . 801
	T. W. Dunn . . . . . 672		Mary E. Lermond . . 314
	John K. Souther . . . 737		Joseph B. Thomas . .1564
	or 944	1901	Sch. James Pierce . . .1664
	James B. Jordan . . . 686		Joseph G. Ray . . . .1253
	Hattie Dunn . . . . . 414		William H. Yerkes .1498
1885	Sch. W. J. Lermond . . 843		L. Herbert Taft . . .1492
1886	Sch. Wm. Slater . . . . . 221	1902	Sch. Harry T. Hay-
1887	Sch. Mattie E. Eaton . . 590		wood . . . . .1203
	Phineas W. Sprague . 788	1903	Sch. Washington B.
1888	Sch. Cora Dunn . . . . . 527		Thomas . . . . .2639
	Willie H. Childs . . . 626		E. Marie Brown . . . . 456
1889	Sch. Robert McFar-	1904	Sch. Margaret Thomas 410
	land . . . . . 641		Mary Bradford
	Mabel Jordan . . . . . 899		Pierce . . . . .1427

	Tons		Tons
	E. Starr Jones . . . . . 916	1919	Sch. William G. Harri-
	Helen E. Taft . . . . . 1197		man . . . . . 1450
	Helen Thomas . . . . . 1470		M. Vivian Pierce . . . 1411
1905	Sch. Stillman F. Killey . 685		Bktine. Cecil P. Stew-
1917	Sch. Nancy Hanks . . . . 1162		art . . . . . 1216
	Jessie G. Noyes . . . . . 1376		Reine Marie Stew-
	Ida S. Dow . . . . . 1411		art . . . . . 1307
1918	Sch. Augustus Hilton . 1562	1920	Sch. Atlantic Coast . . . 1643
	Margaret Throop . . 1264		Edna Hoyt . . . . . 1512
	Steamer Utoka . . . . . 2599		



## *Thomaston Sea Captains*

Anderson, Rasmus B.	Crawford, George W.	Gates, Barnabas
Andrews, Dennis	“ Rufus	“ Edmund C.
“ Obed	Creighton, Ebenezer	“ Miles
Archibald, Edw.	“ James A.	Gerry, George
Averill, Otis	“ James E.	Gilchrist, James
	Crosby, Robert	“ Joseph
Bentley, John	Curling, Frank	“ Levi B.
Booker, John B.	“ Sanders	“ R. L.
Bradford, Edward	Cutler, Irel	“ Walter
Brown, Earl		“ Ward
“ John 1st	Darby, Isaac	Gilley, Lewis W.
“ John 2nd	Dizer, John 1st	Gloyd, George
“ John 3rd	“ John 2nd	
“ William	Dow, Amos	
Burgess, Joseph S.	“ George	Hall, Robert
Burnham, James	Dunn, John	Hallowell, Frank
	“ Robert	“ Reuel
Campbell, Robert N.	“ Watson	“ William
Carney, George		Harrington, Hollis
“ Walter		“ William
Chadwick, Alton	Ellems, William B.	Haskell, Charles
Chapman, James F.	Emerson, Joseph	Hathorn, Charles
Clough, Stephen	Elliot, Arthur	“ Halsie
Cole, William		Havener, Jos. Albert
Colley, Edward	Fales, David, Jr.	Hawk, John
“ Lewis	“ Henry H.	Healey, G. Dodge
“ Thomas	“ James	“ Sylvester
“ William	“ Nathaniel	Henderson, Dunbar
Cookson, John	“ O. Harvey	1st
Coombs, John M.	“ Washburn	“ Dunbar
Copeland, John	“ Wm. James	2nd
“ William	Flinton, Thomas	“ James
Counce, Edwin S.	Fuller, Samuel	“ Wm. 1st
Cox, John	“ Thomas	“ Wm. 2nd

Henry, Bartholomew	McLellan, Isaac	McFarland, Frank
" John B.	" James B.	" George
" John C.	" Simon	" James
Hewes, William	" Thomas	" Kilpatrick
Hodgkins, William	Mehan, Francis	" Oliver
Hodgman, David	Mero, Oscar	" Richard
Hyder, Alden	Miller, Peter	" Simon
" Ballard	Mills, Harvey	" William
" Dodge	" Warren	" Wm. J.
" Halvah	Mitchell, George A.	Roney, John
" Haunce	" Steuben	" John B.
" J. Burnham	Montgomery, Ernest	Russell, Frank
" Wm. Mc.	Morton, James	
	Morse, John D.	
Jordan, Ephraim	" Henry	Shibles, Simon
" George	" Oliver	Singer, William
" Joshua L.	Murphy, Timothy	" William J.
" Newell		Slater, William
" Oliver	Norebeck, John	Smalley, Edward
" Samuel C.		" William W.
" William	O'Brien, Frank	Smith, William
	" John	Snow, Ambrose
Kelleran, Bartholomew	" Joseph	" Robert 2nd
" Edward	" William	" Thomas A.
" Hovey	Oliver, David	Spear, Arthur
" James	" Edward P.	Speed, James
	" Lewis	Sprague, James T.
		" John O.
Lermond, Edward	Paine, John G.	Stackpole, Elkanah
" William J.	Peabody, Hugh	" Fred
Levensaler, Caleb	Post, Alexander	" Harris
Libbey, Thomas	" Ezekiel	Staples, Willard W.
Lowry, Fred B.	Pressey, William	Starrett, Earl
	Prince, George	Stimpson, Chas. W.
		Strong, Allen
Maloney, John	Ranlett, Charles E.	" Jonathan
Masters, Ed	Rivers, David	" Joseph
" George	" William W.	" Littleton
" Silas	Robbins, Redding-	Sumner, David H.
" William	ton	
McFarland, John	Robinson, Alden	Thorndike, Horace
" Robert	" Edw. A.	" Israel



Tobey, William	Watson, James	Whitney, William
“ William J.	Watts, Albert F.	Willey, Ichabod
Turner, John	“ Alfred	“ Walter
	“ Artemus	“ William
	“ Bartholomew	Williams, Austin
Verge, Enos	“ Charles	“ Charles
Vesper, Alton	“ Edward B.	“ John
“ Ambrose	“ Edwin	“ H. Herbert
“ Peter	“ Frank	“ Thomas C.
Vose, Burton	“ Fred	Wilson, Jesse
“ Edward K.	“ James 1st	“ Joseph
“ Isaac	“ James 2nd	“ Life
“ James	“ Robert G.	“ Ross
“ Thomas	“ Samuel	“ Wilbur
	“ William 1st	“ William J.
Waldo, Fred	“ William 2nd	
Walker, Charles	“ Wm. Henry	
Wallace, Francis C.	Webb, Barnabas	
“ George W.	“ Dodge	Young, Gideon
“ John	“ Edmund R.	“ Gleason
Washburn, Chas. P.	Whitmore, Charles	“ James
“ Judson R.	“ Leander	“ Robert























